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The Library of Robert Morris, Civil Rights Lawyer & Activist

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The Library of Robert Morris, Antebellum Civil Rights Lawyer & Activist*

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Abstract (50 words or less):

This article analyzes the Robert Morris library, the only known extant, antebellum African American-owned library. The seventy-five titles, including two unique pamphlet compilations, reveal Morris's intellectual commitment to full citizenship, equality, and participation for people of color. The library also demonstrates the importance of book and pamphlet publication as means of community building among antebellum civil rights activists. Finally, although studies of lawyers'

* This article grew out of preliminary research we did when curating an exhibit entitled "Robert Morris: Lawyer & Activist," featuring books from Robert Morris's personal library, held by the John J. Burns Library at Boston College, supplemented with letters and ephemera from the Robert Morris Papers at the Boston Athenaeum. Our sincerest thanks to the following people for their encouragement and support: the staff of the Burns Library, with particular thanks to Christian Dupont, Katherine Fox, Barbara Hebard, Shelley Barber, Andrew Isidoro, and Kathleen Monahan; the staff of the Boston Athenaeum, particularly Stanley Cushing; and our colleagues at Boston College Law School, particularly Filippa Anzalone and the law library staff. For research assistance, we thank Adanna Uwazurike, Ritika Bhakhri, and Lauren Koster. Morris's books came to our attention initially because of a blog by James Heffernan, former Burns Library Conservation Assistant & BC '15, reporting on his assignment to isolate the Morris books from the larger Bostonia Collection. See <https://perma.cc/8397-YE2Y>. The authors thank Alfred Brophy, Sharon O'Connor, and John D. Gordan III for suggestions.

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libraries have focused on large collections, this article provides a model for interpreting small libraries, particularly where few personal papers remain extant.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
The Library	10
Massachusetts Self-Made Man	15
Legal Apprenticeship	21
African American Identity and the Politics of Poetry	25
Early Civil Rights: <i>Roberts v. City of Boston</i>	31
Full and Equal Citizenship	40
Resistance	51
Family and Faith	64
Conclusion	75
Appendix 1: The Robert Morris Collection	78
Appendix 2: Morris Ownership Indicia (Images)	92



Courtesy of the Social Law Library, Boston, MA.

There's not a breathing of the common wind that will forget thee.

—Robert Morris's extract of William Wordsworth's "To Toussaint L'Ouverture"

Introduction

In a striking portrait, Robert Morris (1823[5?]-1882) looks out at the viewer, formally dressed in a long coat and vest, his arm resting comfortably on a Greek pedestal, a watch fob secured to his vest button, with what looks like a Maltese cross. He appears to be about to emerge from the portrait and begin his legal argument. Morris long has been known as the second African American lawyer in the United States and scholarship has focused on his role in early nineteenth-century efforts in Boston to desegregate the schools and represent fugitive slaves.¹

¹ Stephen Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom: Fighting for Black Citizenship in a White Republic, 1829-1889* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013); John D. Gordan III, *The Fugitive Slave Rescue Trial of Robert Morris: Benjamin Robbins Curtis on the Road to Dred Scott* (Clark, NJ: Talbot Publishing, 2013); Stephen Kendrick and Paul Kendrick, *Sarah's Long Walk: The Free Blacks of Boston and*

Because of the apparent absence of extensive personal papers, however, Morris's intellectual and emotional commitments have remained in the shadows.² His personal library offers a lens to reconstruct the mind of this remarkable man.

Morris's personal library appears unremarkable at first glance. The books are not in the greatest shape. Some covers have become detached. The bindings often are ordinary. A number of the editions are not notable. The quantity of books does not begin to rival the libraries of lawyer collectors such as Thomas Jefferson or John Adams. But Robert Morris's library represents the only currently known, extant library of an early African American activist. His books emphasize that his participation in the civil rights and antislavery movements arose from a deep intellectual commitment to American equality and to full citizenship rights and participation in American life for people of color. The library restores Morris to his rightful place as a leader in the antebellum civil rights movement.

How Their Struggle for Equality Changed America (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004); Gary Collison, *Shadrach Minkins: From Fugitive Slave to Citizen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); William Leonard, "Black and Irish Relations in Nineteenth Century Boston: The Interesting Case of Lawyer Robert Morris," *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 65.

² Some of Morris's papers do survive. Two collections are known to us. First, the Papers of Robert Morris at the Boston Athenaeum provide an invaluable glimpse into Morris's activism and legal practice, as the collection includes petitions to the legislature, miscellaneous legal documents from Morris's cases, and letters from clients and friends. These gave us great insight into Morris and helped us connect some dots, including establishing his connection to Boston College. However, the collection does not contain much in the way of Morris's own writing. Second, we learned that the Canton Historical Society holds several items related to Morris, including a scrapbook and account book. Despite repeated efforts, we were unable to obtain access to this collection, which may hold additional information about Morris's book collection.

With the rise of the study of the history of the book and cultural history, lawyers' libraries and book collections have proved a fertile source of scholarship.³ The famous libraries of founding era lawyers such as Thomas Jefferson and John Adams long have been an interest of scholars.⁴ Recreating working libraries of more ordinary lawyers has offered insight into legal practices.⁵ Lawyer libraries also have been mined for insights into the law book trade and transatlantic exchanges of legal information.⁶ To date, however, these libraries represent only white lawyers.

Although Morris was admittedly one of few pre-Civil War African American lawyers, he was not alone among founding and antebellum-era African Americans in building a personal library. The only collection known to us, however, is the small library of Phillis Wheatley (c.1753-1784).⁷ Although the

³ See, e.g., David D. Hall et al., *A History of the Book in America*, 5 vols. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007-2010).

⁴ See, e.g., E. Millicent Sowerby, *The Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson*, 5 vols. (Washington: Library of Congress, 1952-1959); *Catalogue of the John Adams Library in the Public Library of the City of Boston* (Boston: The Trustees, 1917); Robert C. Baron and Conrad Edick Wright, eds., *The Libraries, Leadership, & Legacy of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2010).

⁵ Mary Sarah Bilder, "The Lost Lawyers: Early American Legal Literates and Transatlantic Legal Culture," *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities* 11, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 47, 85-102 (the library of William Harris); M.H. Hoeflich, "Auctions and the Distribution of Law Books in Antebellum America," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 113, no. 1 (April 2003): 135-161 (discussing insights from auction catalogues of libraries of various lawyers in ordinary practice).

⁶ M. H. Hoeflich, *Legal Publishing in Antebellum America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Daniel J. Hulsebosch, "An Empire of Law: Chancellor Kent and the Revolution in Books in the Early Republic," *Alabama Law Review* 60, no. 2 (2009): 377-424; John Langbein, "Chancellor Kent and the History of Legal Literature," *Columbia Law Review* 93, no. 3 (April 1993): 547-94.

⁷ "Phillis Wheatley Legacy Library," LibraryThing, <https://perma.cc/95LK-PCT2>. Through references in correspondence, provenance information documented in library catalog records, and Wheatley's own literary works, volunteers at LibraryThing have identified 18 books to date that she either owned (11) or at least read (7).

collectors lived a half-century apart, their libraries share three significant similarities. First, both libraries contain the poetical works of Alexander Pope.⁸ Second, both collections include antislavery works.⁹ Third, both contain works about Africa.¹⁰ David Waldstreicher has pointed out that Wheatley posed a threat to men such as Thomas Jefferson by being deeply informed about the “ancients, moderns, Africans, and Americans.”¹¹ Morris’s library offered a similar threat to white political thinkers through his deep engagement with the Western cultural tradition that embraced authors such as Pope even as it expanded the enslavement of Africans and African Americans.¹² For both collectors, the act of owning books became a way to impose African American ownership on a European intellectual

⁸ Wheatley’s copy of *The Works of Alexander Pope Esq.*, 9 vols. (London, 1766) is held by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, along with her copy of Pope’s translation of *The Odyssey of Homer*, 4 vols. (London, 1771); she also owned Pope’s translation of *The Iliad of Homer*, 5 vols. (London 1771), now held by Dartmouth College Library. Morris’s library includes *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope*, new ed. (Philadelphia: J. J. Woodward, [1836?]).

⁹ Wheatley owned Anthony Benezet’s *Some Historical Account of Guinea: Its Situation, Produce and the General Disposition of Its Inhabitants. With an inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Slave-Trade, Its Nature and Lamentable Effects* [. . .] (Philadelphia, 1771) (held by the Swerm Library at the College of William and Mary), which includes a piece by English abolitionist Granville Sharp, who gave Wheatley a copy of his *Remarks on Several Very Important Prophecies* (London, 1768) (held by Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum). For Morris’s antislavery books, see *infra* section, “Resistance.”

¹⁰ Anthony Benezet, *Some Historical Account of Guinea* [. . .] (Philadelphia, 1771) (Wheatley’s copy now held by the Swerm Library at William and Mary). For Morris, see, e.g., J. A. Carnes, *Journal of a Voyage from Boston to the West Coast of Africa: With a Full Description of the Manner of Trading with the Natives on the Coast* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1852); Paul B. Du Chaillu, *Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa; With Accounts of the Manners and Customs of the People* [. . .] (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1861).

¹¹ David Waldstreicher, “Ancients, Moderns, and Africans: Phillis Wheatley and the Politics of Empire and Slavery in the American Revolution,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 37, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 701, 732.

¹² See Simon Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

tradition. Wheatley had little opportunity to patronize other African American writers, but a generation later, Morris's purchase of Wheatley's poetry represented an insistence on African American inclusion in this larger intellectual tradition. Morris indeed may mark one of the first self-conscious African American collectors of the African American experience, placing him in the company of later collector Arturo Alfonso Schomburg who sought to collect and understand the "global black experience."¹³

Morris and Wheatley could not have been alone as collectors. Far more work needs to be done on recovering the private libraries of African Americans. Universities, libraries, and historical societies can undertake investigations of their provenance files to find African American donations. Catalogers of rare books can create local collections that pull together books containing ownership indicia of early African American readers and collectors. Historians and biographers who discover the history of book purchases and ownership through documentation such as auction catalogs and estate inventories can place such information in a source note. Such endeavors will contribute to the growing history on African American access to libraries and literary societies.¹⁴ Of particular importance, the libraries of

¹³ "Celebrating 90 Years of the Schomburg," New York Public Library, <https://perma.cc/VJ6A-NUJB>.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Cheryl Knott, *Not Free, Not for All: Public Libraries in the Age of Jim Crow* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015); David M. Battles, *The History of Public Library Access for African Americans in the South: Or, Leaving Behind the Plow* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2009).

early African American lawyers will likely reveal the porous boundaries between private legal practice and more public legal advocacy for civil rights.¹⁵

Although the uncertain boundaries of the Morris library make it difficult to analyze in terms of conventional library and book collecting categories such as size, cost, category, and comprehensiveness, the small, somewhat ragged library holds insights into the owner's mind. Morris's library reflects the transformative nature of books, so eloquently described by his contemporary, Frederick Douglass. In a famous chapter in his autobiography, Douglass recalled the importance of books as a young enslaved man and how he was often "suspected of having a book." Books were keys. As a twelve-year old, he "got hold of a book entitled 'The Columbian Orator'" and read a "bold denunciation of slavery, and a powerful vindication of human rights" in the printed speeches on behalf of Catholic emancipation. Douglass recalled that the "reading of these documents enabled me to utter my thoughts."¹⁶ Morris's library was a key to developing his arguments for full and equal rights of people of color. The library allows us to hear Morris's thoughts.

Even in the absence of related correspondence or personal journals, the mere list of books selected by Morris makes apparent the themes that motivated his

¹⁵ See, e.g., Kenneth Mack, *Representing Race: The Creation of the Civil Rights Lawyer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); Rosalind Rosenberg, *Jane Crow: The Life of Pauli Murray* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Sarah Azaransky, *The Dream is Freedom: Pauli Murray and American Democratic Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); J. Clay Smith, *Emancipation: The Making of the Black Lawyer, 1844-1944* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); Genna Rae McNeil, *Groundwork: Charles Hamilton Houston and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983).

¹⁶ *Narrative of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845), 38-40.

life. The library reveals a man whose entire career was driven by a commitment to the most robust understanding of equal citizenship. These books show the synergies between Morris and the African American civil rights community, as well as with the white antislavery and Transcendentalist literary community.

Our primary goal is to show the power of the library as a historical source. This article is not a literary biography of Morris or an analysis of antebellum civil rights activism, although we hope the article makes contributions in both respects. Rather than exhaustively analyze each book in the library, we have chosen a select few to demonstrate how the library reveals the rich intellectual life of the owner. For scholars of early nineteenth-century American history, particular of civil rights and antislavery, we include the entire library in Appendix 1. In particular, we hope this article will encourage others to recover, reconstruct, and interpret other libraries of nineteenth-century people of color.

Each section in this article is prefaced by the title and publication information of several Morris books. We show how one can “read” the mere presence of those books, along with small clues like acquisition dates, inscriptions, brief notations, and bindings. After a brief overview of the library and provenance, the article proceeds largely chronologically and thematically. Morris’s early life and legal apprenticeship paralleled the stories of other self-made men of New England. Yet he always understood that the African American story was unique. He identified with notable African Americans, as well as with the antebellum

antislavery movement. For Morris, antislavery activism was part of a larger struggle for full and equal citizenship and an expansive understanding of civil rights. His library allows for the reinterpretation of Morris's involvement in crucial legal cases and appreciation for his centrality to those events. The library also emphasizes the importance of the broader antebellum civil rights movement beyond abolitionism. The article concludes with a section on Morris's relatively late conversion to Catholicism and friendship with the founders of Boston College, for it was because of this relationship that Morris's library survives.

The Library

Robert Morris's library lives on at Boston College because of decisions made by Catharine Morris, Robert's wife. Books were integral to their relationship. Both before and after their 1846 marriage, they exchanged books. At Robert's death in 1882, his will bequeathed his law books to his son, Robert, and the residue to Catharine. Robert Jr., the couple's only surviving child, unfortunately died two weeks after his father. When Catharine died in 1895, her will bequeathed the residue of her estate to the Church of the Immaculate Conception in downtown Boston; this Jesuit church and Boston College essentially were one and the same at that time.¹⁷ We have been unable to ascertain whether the books made their way to

¹⁷ Catharine Morris, will dated Nov. 3, 1895, proved Dec. 12, 1895, Suffolk County Registry of Probate, Boston, MA, Ancestry.com; Charles F. Donovan, David R. Dunigan, and Paul A.

Boston College after Robert's death or after Catharine's death via her residual bequest to the Church of the Immaculate Conception. After the books became part of Boston College's early library collection, most of the Morris volumes received a Boston College library bookplate, noting "Ex Dono Roberti Morris." All but a few contain a Boston College High School stamp. At some point after the university portion of Boston College moved from the South End of Boston to nearby Chestnut Hill (the high school remained downtown), the Morris books made their way into the collection of the John J. Burns Library, home of the University's special collections and archives.

The precise number and identity of the books in Robert Morris's library at the time of donation is unknown. No inventory accompanied his will, and he does not appear to have kept a separate list. As shown in Appendix 1, the Morris collection today at the Burns Library is comprised of seventy-five titles. The numerous Boston College High School and Boston College library stamps indicate that the books once were part of working collections. For example, the *Federalist* is stamped "Lower Library History. Constitutional Hist," and the *Narrative of Frederick Douglass* bears two different Boston College stamps including "Lower Library Biography." Prior to the move into special collections, some of Morris's books may have been discarded, or they may remain intermingled with Boston

FitzGerald, *History of Boston College: From the Beginnings to 1990* (Chestnut Hill, MA: University Press of Boston College), 20-21.

College's other library collections. For example, Harriet Beecher Stowe is represented by four works in Morris's collection and as the author of the introduction to William Cooper Nell's *Colored Patriots of the American Revolution*. Nonetheless, her most famous book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, does not appear in the list. Although Morris might have begun buying her work only in the wake of the 1853 publication, it is also possible that he owned the book and his copy has disappeared over the years. Thus, the list reproduced in Appendix 1 represents the extant section of a larger original library.

Indeed, although Morris's will bequeathed his "Law Books" to Robert Morris Jr., the surviving collection does not include any books for a legal practice.¹⁸ It is possible that they went to another practitioner when Robert Jr. died suddenly after his father. If Morris followed his usual habit, his law books likely were signed on the front paste-down or fly-leaf and perhaps dated. We reproduce Morris's signature in Appendix 2 to aid librarians, dealers, and book collectors in identifying any such extant books.

Morris's practice of signing and often dating his books provides critical information about his acquisition history. All but nine of the titles either have a signature or other clear Morris ownership indicia beyond an "Ex Dono Roberti

¹⁸ Morris's will states, "I give devise and bequeath to Robert Morris Jr., my Law Books, my office desks, the pictures and engravings in my office." He named Catharine Morris executrix and residuary beneficiary. Robert Morris, will dated Dec. 2, 1881, proved Jan. 22, 1883, Suffolk County Registry of Probate, Boston, MA, Ancestry.com.

Morris” bookplate.¹⁹ Of these sixty-six titles, at least two were gifts from Morris to his wife, Catharine, and two were gifts from Catharine to Robert. Two titles were gifts from others to Morris, and one title a gift to Robert and Catharine jointly. The nine titles that do not have such clear marks of ownership are included in the Boston College Libraries catalog as part of the Morris collection—all nine have Morris gift bookplates, and five have visible writing under the bookplate, illegible to us, that likely includes Morris’s signature.

The collection reflects Morris’s engagement with a Northern intellectual and political cohort during the three decades between the 1830s and the 1860s. The dates accompanying Morris’s signature show that he usually acquired them the same year or within a year of publication. Boston publishers produced thirty-two of the books, with New York and Philadelphia following close behind. Of the Boston publishers, the various incarnations of Ticknor & Fields, Phillips Sampson, and James Munroe & Company repeatedly appear. In New York, Harper & Brothers dominated. Moreover, the books indicate Morris’s support for authors and publishers at the vanguard of the civil rights and antislavery efforts. He owned the Anti-Slavery Committee’s publication of Frederick Douglass’s autobiography. He bought books published by African American printers, Benjamin Roberts and

¹⁹ Unfortunately, many of the Morris books have a gift bookplate pasted over his signature. In the twenty-six instances where we could read his name through the bookplate, we counted those titles as having clear evidence of his ownership.

David Walker. Morris also acquired books printed by J. P. Jewett, the printer who first published *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.²⁰

Leading authors of color (Wheatley, Douglass, Nell, Lewis, and Walker) found a home in the library. Transcendentalists and liberals (Channing, Martineau, Emerson) were represented. Multiple books by antislavery belles lettres authors (Stowe, Whittier, Lowell) were present. Political critiques of American slavery and records of efforts to end slavery and ensure civil rights for people of color were acquired (Garrison, Goodell, Copley, Griffiths). Histories of African slavery and revolts were purchased. Accounts of great leaders and political principles appeared. Books written by the most famous female authors of Morris's time were acquired (Stowe and Martineau), along with accounts of famous men by their wives (Mann and Hugo). And repeatedly, Morris added books of poetry.

Unfortunately, the likely incomplete nature of the library renders any thoughts about changes in Morris's purchasing habits necessarily speculative. The earliest book with a definitive acquisition date is an 1840 gift to Morris when he around fifteen years old.²¹ Earlier copyright dates appear on three works of poetry, including Phillis Wheatley's poems and John Stedman's *Narrative* [. . .] *Against*

²⁰ Claire Parfait, *The Publishing History of Uncle Tom's Cabin, 1852-2002* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2007); Michael Winship, "Two Early American Bestsellers: Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* and Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," *Common-place* 9, no. 3 (April 2009), <https://perma.cc/9QUA-KNSR>.

²¹ [Henry Ingersoll Bowditch], *Memoir of Nathaniel Bowditch* (Boston: James Munroe, 1841) (the inscription is curiously dated before the publication date).

the Revolted Negroes of Surinam; however, we do not know when Morris acquired these titles.

Beginning in 1840, the collection includes books published almost every year with a few noticeable gaps. The only two-year gaps in the collection occur for 1842-1843 and 1862-1863 (likely a byproduct of the war). The bulk of Morris's collection dates from after his admission to the bar in 1847. An independent income and deepening political activism likely explain the rise in purchases.

The last book clearly signed by Morris was James Pike's *The Prostrate State*.²² Pike's dismissive, racist, and critical discussion of South Carolina's post-Reconstruction government likely saddened and angered Morris. Two books, not clearly signed by Morris, postdate Pike's. One, *Old Naumkeag*, was an account of the history of Salem, his birthplace.²³ The other, *Indian History*, recounted the life of one of Morris's heroes, "the good sachem Massasoit." The preface by publisher and Massasoit descendant Zerviah Gould Mitchell summarized Morris's lifelong belief in the power of books to promote justice: "Before going to my grave I have thought it proper to be heard in behalf of my oppressed countrymen; and I now, through the medium of the printing press, and in book form, speak to the

²² James Pike, *The Prostrate State: South Carolina under Negro Government* (New York: D. Appleton, 1874).

²³ C. H. Webber and W. S. Nevins, *Old Naumkeag: An Historical Sketch of the City of Salem, and the Towns of Marblehead, Peabody, Beverly, Danvers, Wenham, Manchester, Topsfield, and Middleton*, intro. Henry L. Williams (Salem, MA: A. A. Smith, 1877).

understanding and sense of justice of the reading public.”²⁴ Morris’s library embodied this belief that books represented deliverance through the medium of the printing press.

Massachusetts Self-Made Man

Henry I. Bowditch, *Memoir of Nathaniel Bowditch* (Boston: James Munroe, 1841).

Alonzo Lewis, *The History of Lynn, Including Nahant*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Samuel N. Dickinson, 1844).

Robert Morris was born in Salem, Massachusetts, likely on June 8, 1825.²⁵ His grandfather, Cumono (sometimes spelled Quommono or Quammono), was born in Africa and “was carried to Ipswich when he was quite young.”²⁶ Whether Cumono was initially enslaved is unknown, but Ipswich, Massachusetts town records indicate that he at least was free by 1778.²⁷ In the 1783 *Quock Walker* case, a justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court declared that slavery was

²⁴ Ebenezer Weaver Peirce, preface to *Indian History, Biography and Genealogy: Pertaining to the Good Sachem Massasoit of the Wampanoag Tribe, and His Descendants*, by Zerviah Gould Mitchell (North Abington, MA: Zerviah Gould Mitchell, 1878), iv-v.

²⁵ “Eulogy of Hon. Edwin G. Walker,” in *In Memoriam: Robert Morris, Sr., Born June 8, 1823, Died 12, 1882* ([Boston?]: n.d., ca. 1883), 28. Most sources use 1823 as Morris’s birth year, but the age indicated in his death record and most census records on Ancestry.com indicate that he was born in 1825. The city of Salem does not have his birth record.

²⁶ “Eulogy of Hon. Edwin G. Walker,” 27.

²⁷ Robert’s grandparents recorded their intention to marry on November 3, 1778. It reads as follows: “Quammono Morris and Cate Wallis, free negroes [*sic*], both of Ipswich.” “Records of Births and Baptisms, Publishments, Marriages, Deaths &c. in the Town of Ipswich from 1734 to 1783,” 1879, book 2, 264, Ancestry.com.

effectively abolished by the 1780 Massachusetts Constitution.²⁸ Robert's father, York Morris, was born in 1786 and became a well-regarded waiter in the homes of Salem's elite. Little information exists about Robert's mother, Mercy (Thomas) Morris, but she was born around 1792 in Marblehead and married York in 1813. The couple eventually had eleven children, including Robert.²⁹

A nondescript book in Morris's library suggests Morris's compelling personal character even as a young man. His copy of Henry I. Bowditch's *Memoir of Nathaniel Bowditch* is inscribed to "Robert Morris from his friend J. G. K. Jan. 1. 1840."³⁰ It almost certainly was given to Morris by John G. King, a Salem lawyer and abolitionist. After York Morris's untimely death in 1834, Morris began working at King's home as a waiter.³¹ At the time of the gift, Morris was around fifteen and had known King for five or six years. King emphasized the personal relationship with the inscription, "his friend."

King's gift of the *Memoir* carried a statement about Morris's capacity and future path. Nathaniel Bowditch was "America's foremost astronomer and mathematician."³² Henry Ingersoll Bowditch, his son and also author of the book,

²⁸ A. Leon Higginbotham Jr., *In the Matter of Color: Race and the American Legal Process; The Colonial Period* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 91-99.

²⁹ Stephen Kendrick and Paul Kendrick, *Sarah's Long Walk: The Free Blacks of Boston and How Their Struggle for Equality Changed America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 10.

³⁰ [Henry Ingersoll Bowditch], *Memoir of Nathaniel Bowditch* (Boston: James Monroe, 1841).

³¹ Kendrick and Kendrick, *Sarah's Long Walk*, 12-13.

³² Tamara Plakins Thornton, *Nathaniel Bowditch and the Power of Numbers: How a Nineteenth-Century Man of Business, Science, and the Sea Changed American Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 1.

was an active abolitionist.³³ Like Morris, Bowditch had been born in Salem. He was apprenticed at a young age and self-educated. According to historian Tamara Platkin Thornton, Bowditch's life became the model of the self-made man. She notes that in 1838, the *Colored American* published a story hoping "to inspire its readers with a 'sketch of the early struggles of the boy BOWDITCH with the disadvantages of fortune.'"³⁴ In gifting the book to his friend, a young African American man, King prophesied that Morris too could become a self-made man.

This book and inscription also reflect Morris's strong relationships with white abolitionists and activists like King. His connections would later include Boston mayor Josiah Quincy Jr. and United States senator Charles Sumner. Morris had a particular ability to move between different communities—African American and Brahmin, African American and Irish, Protestant and Catholic, wealthy and poor—and it appears that this fluidity was present early in his life with his relationship with King. In fact, Morris would later encounter Nathaniel's biographer and son, Henry Ingersoll Bowditch, as they worked to integrate Boston's public schools.³⁵

It bears noting that John G. King dated his inscription on the Bowditch book January 1. The practice of gifting books on New Year's Day remained common

³³ Thornton, *Nathaniel Bowditch*, 237-38.

³⁴ Thornton, *Nathaniel Bowditch*, 245.

³⁵ H. I. B., "Educational Spirit of Caste," *Liberator*, July 10, 1846, 111, c. 3-4, ProQuest.

throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.³⁶ Books were released in December for these sales.³⁷ The tradition of giving a book for the New Year followed Morris throughout his life. Perhaps the Salem lawyer introduced him to the custom, as it is the earliest such book in Morris's library.

Four years later, Morris received another gift book from a young woman. Catharine H. Mason inscribed *The History of Lynn* to "Robert Morris Jr. from C.H.M. - Jan. 1, 1845."³⁸ That same New Year's holiday, Morris gave her one of the loveliest volumes in the collection, a gift book of poetry by the English Romantic poet Felicia Hemans. He included a more daring inscription on the front fly-leaf: "Miss Catharine H. Mason with the love of Robert Morris, Jr. Jan[uar]y 1, 1845."³⁹ The book features a beautiful, ornate binding of green cloth with gilt lettering and pictorial decorations, for which Robert would have paid dearly. This New Year's Day exchange occurred a little over a year before Morris married Catharine, "daughter of Mr. Joseph Mason, a highly respected citizen of Boston."⁴⁰ Another book, from 1860, bears the inscription, "Catharine Morris, with the love

³⁶ Kevin MacDonnell, "The American Gift Book," Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America, <https://perma.cc/R9CH-XH68h>; William D. Crump, ed., *The Christmas Encyclopedia*, 3rd ed. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004), 198.

³⁷ Jessica DeSpain, *Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Reprinting and the Embodied Book* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 51 n.3.

³⁸ Alonzo Lewis, *The History of Lynn, Including Nahant*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Samuel N. Dickinson, 1844).

³⁹ Rufus W. Griswold, ed., *Poems by Felicia Hemans* (Philadelphia: Sorin and Ball, 1845). Morris had a curious habit of using "Jr." even though his father's name was York. After his own son Robert was born, he seems to have handed the suffix over to his son.

⁴⁰ "Eulogy of Hon. Edwin G. Walker," in *In Memoriam: Robert Morris, Sr., Born June 8, 1823, Died 12, 1882* ([Boston?]: n.d., ca. 1883), 31.

and New Years' wishes of Robert Morris. Jan. 1, 1860," suggesting that they continued these exchanges, a custom that suggests an affectionate, companionate marriage and a shared intellectual appreciation of books.⁴¹

Catharine's choice of Lewis's *The History of Lynn* also signifies Morris's interest in local history and local writers, particularly in relationship to abolitionist commitments.⁴² Like John G. King, she chose a book for Morris authored by a noted abolitionist, Alonzo Lewis. Lewis was an early vice president of William Lloyd Garrison's New England Anti-Slavery Society and the editor of the several newspapers in Lynn, Massachusetts, including the abolitionist *Freedom's Amulet*.⁴³ In the 1840s, Lynn had become a center of abolitionism and antislavery activism. Frederick Douglass had moved to Lynn, where he would write his first and most famous autobiography.⁴⁴ Lewis's book addressed the great promise of the nation's political system while recognizing the damage inflicted on indigenous people and the curse of slavery: "On its own principles, our government has no right to enslave any portion of its subjects; and I am constrained, in the name of God and truth to

⁴¹ Joseph-Marie Gérando, *Self-Education: Or, The Means and Art of Moral Progress*, trans. Elizabeth P. Peabody (Boston: T. O. H. P. Burnham, 1860).

⁴² Later in his life, Morris acquired a book about his hometown of Salem and its neighboring towns. C. H. Webber and W. S. Nevins, *Old Naumkeag: An Historical Sketch of the City of Salem, and the Towns of Marblehead, Peabody, Beverly, Danvers, Wenham, Manchester, Topsfield, and Middleton*, intro. Henry L. Williams (Salem, MA: A. A. Smith, 1877).

⁴³ *Constitution of the New-England Anti-Slavery Society: With an Address to the Public* (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1832), 6; Jean L. Silver-Isenstadt, *Shameless: The Visionary Life of Mary Gove Nichols* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002), 30.

⁴⁴ *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845), 125.

say, that they must be free. Christianity and political expediency both demand their emancipation, nor will they always remain unheard.”⁴⁵ Although not yet twenty, Morris’s commitment to abolitionism and justice was obvious to Catharine, just as his ambition and innate potential had been obvious to King.

Legal Apprenticeship

Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist, on the New Constitution, Written in the Year 1788*, 6th ed. (Washington: J. & G. S. Gideon, 1845).

Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, *Letters of Pacificus and Helvidius on the Proclamation of Neutrality of 1793* (Washington: J. & G. S. Gideon, 1845).

Without Morris’s law books, the library offers few clues about his legal education. He appears to have learned law as a copyist and apprentice for Ellis Gray Loring. As a ten or eleven-year old, Morris met Loring, another white Boston attorney and abolitionist with whom he had a close and long-lasting relationship. In 1836, Loring attended a Thanksgiving dinner at the King home, and young Morris served the meal. Morris apparently impressed Loring, who hired him on the

⁴⁵ Lewis, introduction to *History of Lynn*, 11-16.

spot to help with errands and chores. Morris rode atop Loring's carriage in the cold November weather back to Boston that very night. After some time, Morris became a copyist for Loring, who ultimately encouraged the young man to study law.⁴⁶ It was upon Loring's motion that Morris became a member of the Massachusetts bar with his admission to the Court of Common Pleas on February 2, 1847.⁴⁷

Despite the support Morris received from progressive white lawyers such as Loring and King, he faced racism, and he faced it largely alone. The only other African American lawyer in the country was Macon Bolling Allen, who had been admitted to practice law in Maine in 1844 and then Massachusetts in 1845.⁴⁸ After Morris's death, his friend and mentee Edwin G. Walker noted that people often mistakenly referred to Morris as the first African American lawyer in the country; Walker said that Morris himself would have corrected them and given Allen credit as first.⁴⁹ It seems likely that the two men would have crossed paths, but we found no direct evidence that they knew each other.

At Morris's memorial service, Walker shared a story about Morris's first case, emphasizing the moments of isolation, frustration, and resilience that Morris

⁴⁶ "Eulogy of Hon. Edwin G. Walker," 28-29.

⁴⁷ "In the Court of Common Pleas," *Liberator*, Feb. 12, 1847, 27, c. 5, ProQuest.

⁴⁸ Allen was born in Indiana and made his way to Maine in the 1840s, where he obtained a license to practice. He soon moved to Boston and was admitted to practice in Massachusetts in May 1845. Allen then passed an examination to become a Justice of the Peace in Middlesex County, home of Cambridge. He practice for years in the Boston area before moving to Charleston, South Carolina after the Civil War. Clarence G. Contee, "Macon B. Allen: 'First' Black in the Legal Profession," *The Crisis* 83, no. 2 (February 1976): 67-68.

⁴⁹ "Eulogy of Hon. Edwin G. Walker," 31.

must have experienced throughout his career. Morris was representing a client who alleged nonpayment for services rendered. The day before the trial, he met with opposing counsel. The man berated Morris for bringing the case to trial, shaking his fist in Morris's face and shouting, "Then I will give you the devil!" Upset and shocked by this treatment from a fellow lawyer, Morris returned to his office and cried. He then vowed to prove himself as a lawyer. The next day, in a courtroom filled with members of Boston's African American community, Morris won the case for his client; this achievement made him the first African American lawyer in the country to argue—not to mention win—a case before a jury.⁵⁰ Morris went on to have a long and important legal career, most famously representing the young Sarah Roberts in *Roberts v. the City of Boston* and alleged fugitive slave Shadrach Minkins. He also had a thriving criminal defense practice, often representing Irish immigrants.⁵¹

Perhaps Morris's law books will be found one day; however, even without them, Morris's interest in the Constitution and American government is evident in two classic texts in his library. In *The Federalist*, Hamilton and Madison

⁵⁰ "Eulogy of Hon. Edwin G. Walker," 32-33; "Robert Morris," *Liberator*, Jan. 28, 1848, 15, c. 1, ProQuest.

⁵¹ "Eulogy of Hon. Edwin G. Walker," 34-35. He also once defended his own brother Joseph against charges of selling liquor without a license. Morris argued mistaken identity. In an amusing move to make his point, he quietly substituted Joseph with another brother, Charles, who then was (wrongly) identified by a witness. Since all three brothers greatly resembled each other, Morris joked with the undoubtedly baffled witness, asking if perhaps Robert himself had sold the liquor. Joseph was acquitted. "An Old Incident Revived," *Boston Daily Globe*, Apr. 18, 1880, 9, c. 3, ProQuest.

collaborated in defending the new federal Constitution.⁵² By 1793, they had become opponents authoring opposite sides of the great debate over the president's executive power: Hamilton (Pacificus) defending George Washington's stance of American neutrality; Madison (Helvidius) criticizing it.⁵³ Morris dated his copy of *The Federalist* 1849, when he still was a newly minted lawyer; a bookplate obscures the acquisition date of the *Letters of Pacificus and Helvidius*. In antislavery circles in the 1850s, the fundamental nature of the union and the Constitution's stance on slavery was being debated.⁵⁴ Federalist 54 attempted to explain the Convention's apparent compromise over the three-fifths compromise.⁵⁵ These books provided Morris with the classic defense of the Constitution, as well as an example of the legitimacy of constitutional debate.

In 1846 and 1847, Morris may have been focusing on his legal education and his new family life. During these two years, the library appears to have grown by only one title—a set of volumes given to the Morrises as a gift shortly after their wedding. In March 1846, almost a year before Robert's admission to the bar, Robert and Catharine married at the home of Morris's mentor, Ellis Gray Loring. Boston mayor Josiah Quincy Jr. was present for the occasion, as were the Kings, Morris's

⁵² Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist, on the New Constitution, Written in the Year 1788*, 6th ed. (Washington: J. & G. S. Gideon, 1845).

⁵³ Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, *Letters of Pacificus and Helvidius on the Proclamation of Neutrality of 1793* (Washington: J. & G. S. Gideon, 1845).

⁵⁴ David Ray Papke, *Heretics in the Temple: Americans who Reject the Nation's Legal Faith* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 45-59.

⁵⁵ Mary Sarah Bilder, *Madison's Hand: Revising the Constitutional Convention* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 163-64.

old employers from the Salem. The ceremony was performed by Rev. James Freeman Clarke, a Unitarian minister, abolitionist, and advocate for women's rights.⁵⁶ In June, Clarke gave the couple *The Works of William E. Channing, D. D.*, a six-volume set of writings from a prominent Unitarian minister. He inscribed the books to "Mr. & Mrs. Robert Morris—with the kind regards of their friend James Freeman Clark."⁵⁷ Soon, the Morrises would welcome their first child, daughter Catharine.⁵⁸ The young lawyer was now an established family man.

African American Identity and the Politics of Poetry

Phillis Wheatley, *Memoir and Poems of Phillis Wheatley, a Native African and a Slave. Also, Poems by a Slave*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838).

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845).

John Greenleaf Whittier, *The Tent on the Beach, and Other Poems* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1867).

In addition to attorney, husband, and father, Morris strongly self-identified as African American. He owned books by the two most significant African

⁵⁶ "Married," *Liberator*, May 1, 1846, 71, c. 4, ProQuest.

⁵⁷ *The Works of William E. Channing, D. D.*, 6th ed. 6 vols. (Boston: James Munroe, 1846).

⁵⁸ We could not locate daughter Catharine's birth record, but tragically, her 1856 death record indicates that she was ten years old when she died. "Massachusetts Death Records, 1841-1915," Register of Deaths in the Town of Chelsea for the Year 1856, entry for Catharine D. Morris, 1856, no. 165, Ancestry.com.

American literary figures, Phillis Wheatley and Frederick Douglass. Moreover, the library indicates Morris's early commitment to the larger African American community in Boston and beyond.

The extensive number of poetry volumes in his library directly relate to Morris's life as an African American in Boston. By 1842, Morris was serving as secretary for the Young Men's Literary Society, which had been formed by William Cooper Nell in the 1830s to cultivate knowledge of literature and history in Boston's African American community.⁵⁹ In 1843, Morris served as a teacher in that organization, helping younger students select and prepare pieces for public recitation.⁶⁰ This work corresponded to the significant number of volumes of poetry in Morris's library, about 15% of the total seventy-five titles.⁶¹

⁵⁹ "Notice," *Liberator*, Mar. 11, 1842, 39, c. 6, ProQuest; Dorothy Porter Wesley, "Integration Versus Separatism: William Cooper Nell's Role in the Struggle for Equality," in *Courage and Conscience: Black & White Abolitionists in Boston*, ed. Donald M. Jacobs (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 214.

⁶⁰ "Communications: Lectures before the Colored Citizens of Boston," *Liberator*, Apr. 21, 1843, 62, c. 4, ProQuest.

⁶¹ Three of the earliest published books in the library are works of poetry. *Memoirs and Poems of Phillis Wheatley* (1838) and *The Poetical Works of Coleridge, Shelley and Keats* (1839) were printed before Morris turned 15. Unfortunately, any dates have been obscured by later bookplates, so we do not know if he bought these volumes as a boy or acquired them later. Another poetry book by Thomas Campbell, printed in 1839, bears a date of 1841 and the signature of young Morris as "Robert Morris Jr.," so he at least was acquiring books of poetry by around age sixteen. Indeed, we wondered if Morris might not have written poetry himself. He owned at least one posthumously published work of poems, Joseph Drake's *The Culprit Fay*. Drake's volume was apparently published by his daughter after his wife kept unpublished poems that he had requested be destroyed. "Joseph Rodman Drake," Encyclopaedia Britannica, <https://perma.cc/83U4-MVCL?type=image>. On the number of antebellum lawyers who wrote poetry, see M. H. Hoeflich, ed., *Anthology of Nineteenth Century American Legal Poetry* (Clark, NJ: Talbot Publishing, 2017); M.H. Hoeflich and Lawrence Jenab, "Three Lawyer-Poets of the Nineteenth Century," *Green Bag* 2d 8, no. 3 (Spring 2005): 249-60.

Poetry was linked to politics. Morris's volume of works by Alexander Pope—who, as noted earlier, was read by Phillis Wheatley—could be the earliest book acquired for his library with its probable 1836 publication date.⁶² Michael Hoefflich and Lawrence Jenab note that Pope's satire was particularly popular as “the political weapon of choice.”⁶³ Morris's love of Pope and poetry crept into his correspondence as well. Pope's “Essay on Man,” Epistle IV, included in Morris's volume, contains the famous line, “An honest man's the noblest work of God.” Morris quoted this language in an 1860 letter to Charles Sumner before thanking the Senator for his mindfulness of the hardships faced by African Americans, his antislavery work, and his work on integrating Boston's schools.⁶⁴

Morris seemed to have been particularly drawn to Romantics such as Scottish poet Robert Burns and English poets Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats.⁶⁵ Although no volume of William Wordsworth appears in the library, Morris knew the poet's work, as he copied one of Wordsworth's sonnets into his two books on

⁶² *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope*, new ed. (Philadelphia: J. J. Woodward, [1836?]) (Morris's signature is visible under the bookplate, but his date notation—possibly 1836—is unclear).

⁶³ M.H. Hoefflich and Lawrence Jenab, “Three Lawyer-Poets of the Nineteenth Century,” *Green Bag* 2d 8, no. 3 (Spring 2005): 249, 252.

⁶⁴ Robert Morris to Charles Sumner, 11 June 1860, Charles Sumner Correspondence, 1829-1874 (MS Am 1), Houghton Library, Harvard University, *The Papers of Charles Sumner* (Chadwyck-Healey, 1988), microfilm.

⁶⁵ James Currie, ed., *The Works of Robert Burns* [. . .] (Philadelphia: Crissy & Markley, 1851); William G. T. Shedd, ed., *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* [. . .] (New York: Harper & Bros., 1853); *The Poetical Works of Coleridge, Shelley and Keats: Complete in One Volume* (Philadelphia: Thomas Cowperthwait, 1839).

Toussaint L'Ouverture.⁶⁶ Indeed, the poem may have expressed Morris's aspiration to live his life as his great hero. His transcriptions of the Toussaint L'Ouverture poem represent the only extensive Morris writing in the library.

Morris's acquisition of the 1838 Phillis Wheatley collection combined his love of poetry with his interests in African American authors and the abolitionist press.⁶⁷ Wheatley symbolized "black intellectual and literary achievement, even amidst bondage."⁶⁸ She had been kidnapped from her West African home as a child in the mid-eighteenth-century and sold into slavery in Boston, just one close-to-home example of the kidnappings that Morris knew all too well from his books and his antislavery activism.⁶⁹ Wheaton was emancipated around 1773; she died around age thirty-one in 1784, soon after the abolition of slavery in Massachusetts and decades before Robert Morris was born.⁷⁰

The 1838 edition owned by Morris included a biographical account of Wheatley by Margaretta Matilda Odell.⁷¹ Morris may have focused on the introduction's antislavery message and its recognition of prejudice against African

⁶⁶ Harriet Martineau, *The Hour and the Man: A Historical Romance*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1841); John R. Beard, *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture: The Negro Patriot of Hayti* (London: Ingram, Cooke, 1853). We discuss these books in more detail in the "Resistance" section.

⁶⁷ *Memoir and Poems of Phillis Wheatley, a Native African and a Slave. Also, Poems by a Slave*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838).

⁶⁸ Catherine Adams and Elizabeth H. Pleck, *Love of Freedom: Black Women in Colonial and Revolutionary New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 20.

⁶⁹ Vincent Carretta, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 4-6.

⁷⁰ Carretta, *Phillis Wheatley*, 140-41, 189.

⁷¹ It also included poetry by nineteenth-century African American poet George Moses Horton.

Americans: “But even were the thrall of bondage broken, the hapless victim of slavery would find himself, in but too many cases, we fear, fettered by prejudice—despised by the proud—insulted by the scornful.”⁷² Although the writer claimed that “the stain of slavery has long been erased from the annals of New-England,” Morris may have read these lines with recognition that “the poisonous operations of slavery on public sentiment” applied also to Massachusetts.⁷³

Like the Phillis Wheatley work, Morris’s copy of the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* was published in Boston at 25 Cornhill, then home of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Office and mere blocks from Morris’s longtime law office at 27 State Street.⁷⁴ Morris moved around the center of this hotbed of abolitionism, contributing to it with his own activism and by purchasing books written by people who had experienced the horrors of slavery firsthand. After escaping from slavery in Maryland, the young Douglass had settled for some time in Massachusetts. His *Narrative*, the first of three autobiographies, made him an international figure in the abolitionist movement.⁷⁵

⁷² Odell, introduction to *Memoir and Poems of Phillis Wheatley*, 9. The Odell introduction has been criticized by scholars for “unintentional mythmaking [which] romanticized the poet’s past and minimized her condition in bondage.” Jennifer Rene Young, “Marketing a Sable Muse: Phillis Wheatley and the Antebellum Press,” in *New Essays on Phillis Wheatley*, eds. John C. Shields and Eric Lamore (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011), 219.

⁷³ Odell, introduction to *Memoir and Poems of Phillis Wheatley*, 7-9.

⁷⁴ *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845).

⁷⁵ Faith Berry, ed., *From Bondage to Liberation: Writings by and about Afro-Americans from 1700 to 1918* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 155-56.

Morris and Douglass knew each other, though perhaps not before Morris bought Douglass's first work; he dated his copy May 19, 1845 on the front fly-leaf. In 1853, William Cooper Nell publicly discouraged people from subscribing to *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, the newspaper that Douglass had established in Rochester as a competitor to the *Liberator*. Nell felt that Douglass had treated William Lloyd Garrison poorly with his accusations that Garrison engaged in racial tokenism in his staffing of the paper. Morris, however, publicly sided with Douglass.⁷⁶ That same year, Douglass defended Morris against the slanderous rumors that he would send a fugitive back to a slaveholder.⁷⁷

Morris also repeatedly bought books by other writers who were committed to African American civil rights and the abolition of slavery. Three of the most represented authors in the library were New England writers with abolitionist sentiments: Ralph Waldo Emerson (five titles); Harriet Beecher Stowe (four titles); and John G. Whittier (four titles).⁷⁸ Whittier was a Quaker poet and abolitionist who helped establish the Liberty and Free Soil political parties.⁷⁹ One of Morris's

⁷⁶ Stephen Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom: Fighting for Black Citizenship in a White Republic, 1829-1889* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), 151-55.

⁷⁷ "Our Eastern Tour," *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, Aug. 26, 1853, 2, c. 4-5, Accessible Archives.

⁷⁸ Morris clearly admired the work of Emerson with whom he crossed paths at least once. They both gave powerful antislavery speeches during the annual West India Emancipation Day event in Worcester in 1849. Stephen Kendrick and Paul Kendrick, *Sarah's Long Walk: The Free Blacks of Boston and How Their Struggle for Equality Changed America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 131.

⁷⁹ Charles A. Jarvis, "Admission to Abolition: The Case of John Greenleaf Whittier," *Journal of the Early Republic* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 161.

four Whittier titles is a book of poetry called *Tent on a Beach*, which includes a poem entitled “To the Thirty-Ninth Congress.” It included the following lines:

Make all men peers before the law,
Take hands off the negro’s throat,
Give black and white an equal vote.⁸⁰

A more succinct statement of Morris’s philosophy would be hard to find.

Even the novels in Morris’s library tend towards African American social justice themes. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Dred* and *The Minister’s Wooing* were antislavery novels.⁸¹ Harriet Martineau’s *The Hour and the Man* was the fictionalized account of Toussaint L’Ouverture and the rebellion against French control in Saint-Domingue, which became the independent nation of Haiti in 1804.⁸² Morris also owned a copy of James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Ways of the Hour*, which revolves around a murder trial. As Morris primarily made his living as a criminal defense attorney, Cooper’s object of drawing “the attention of the reader to some of the social evils that beset us; more particularly in connection with the administration of criminal justice” must have been of particular interest to

⁸⁰ John Greenleaf Whittier, *The Tent on the Beach, and Other Poems* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1867), 133.

⁸¹ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Dred; A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, 2 vols. (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, 1856); Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Minister’s Wooing* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1859).

⁸² Harriet Martineau, *The Hour and the Man: A Historical Romance*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1841).

him.⁸³ In Morris's library, life as an African American was inextricably intertwined with the need for lawyers to work—and poets and novelists to write—for justice.

Early Civil Rights: *Roberts v. City of Boston*

R. B. Lewis, *Light and Truth; Collected from the Bible and Ancient and Modern History, Containing the Universal History of the Colored and the Indian Race, from the Creation of the World to the Present Time* (Boston: Committee of Colored Gentlemen, printed by Benjamin F. Roberts, 1844).

Charles Sumner, *Recent Speeches and Addresses* (Boston: Higgins and Bradley, 1856).

As a lawyer, Morris's work for justice began soon after his 1847 admission to the bar. The client who handed him his first major case appears in his library. In 1844, Boston-based printer and activist Benjamin Roberts printed *Light and Truth*, with the explicit statement that the book was published “by a committee of colored gentlemen.” The book's author, Robert Benjamin Lewis, a self-described “colored man,” traced the shared history of oppression between Native Americans and African Americans and argued against white superiority. The introduction aspired to a country where “colored men enjoy every inherent attainment, free from human

⁸³ James Fenimore Cooper, preface to *The Ways of the Hour: A Tale* (New York: James G. Gregory, 1864), vii.

interference.”⁸⁴ Morris dated his copy of the book 1850, the same year that in a devastating decision, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court rejected Morris and Roberts’s legal efforts to integrate the Boston public schools.

Benjamin Roberts’s printing business focused on works commissioned by African American institutions and works by and about members of the African American community.⁸⁵ In addition to books, Roberts printed broadsides for the Boston Vigilance Committee and other antislavery and civil rights groups.⁸⁶ This shared spirit of activism made Morris and Roberts natural partners to take on the City of Boston and its Primary School Committee. In addition to pursuing the lawsuit, the two men spearheaded a boycott of the school into which Roberts’s daughter Sarah was being pushed by the segregated school system.⁸⁷

In the 1840s, Boston’s African American community was relatively small, about 2000 people or 2% of the city’s population.⁸⁸ African American community leaders had begun lobbying for their children to attend any public school—not just the handful of public schools that had been established for African American children. The integration efforts soon culminated in a legal battle. In 1847, school officials denied four-year-old Sarah Roberts admission to the Boston public school

⁸⁴ R. B. Lewis, introduction to *Light and Truth* [. . .] (Boston: Committee of Colored Gentlemen, printed by Benjamin F. Roberts, 1844), iii.

⁸⁵ James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Black Bostonians: Family Life and Community Struggle in the Antebellum North*, rev. ed. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1999), 82.

⁸⁶ Stephen Kendrick and Paul Kendrick, *Sarah’s Long Walk: The Free Blacks of Boston and How Their Struggle for Equality Changed America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 214-15.

⁸⁷ Kendrick and Kendrick, *Sarah’s Long Walk*, 132-40.

⁸⁸ Horton and Horton, *Black Bostonians*, 2, table 1.

closest to her house; she then was forcibly removed from another school by a Boston police officer at the behest of the School Committee due to her race.⁸⁹ The young child's closest segregated option, known as the Belknap Street School or the Abiel Smith School, was "twenty one hundred feet distant from the residence of the plaintiff"; she had to pass five white primary schools to reach it.⁹⁰ Morris was in his early twenties and fresh off the win in his first jury trial when Benjamin Roberts hired him to sue the City of Boston for denying Sarah entry to the Boston public school system.⁹¹

Morris filed a writ of trespass on the case for Sarah and Benjamin Roberts against the City of Boston in early 1848, alleging that Sarah had been excluded unlawfully from the public school closest to her home. The writ gave Morris's name and business address at 27 State Street and was endorsed by Benjamin Roberts.⁹² During the October term of 1848, the trial court ruled for the City of Boston. Morris promptly filed a notice of the plaintiff's intention to appeal.⁹³ He then visited the law office of Charles Sumner and hired Sumner to argue the case on appeal; Sumner agreed to come onboard free of charge.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Kendrick and Kendrick, *Sarah's Long Walk*, 98-99.

⁹⁰ "Statement of Facts," October 1848, Suffolk County Court of Common Pleas, Roberts v. City of Boston, Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Archives, Boston.

⁹¹ Kendrick and Kendrick, *Sarah's Long Walk*, 109.

⁹² Writ, October 1848, Suffolk County Court of Common Pleas, Roberts v. City of Boston, Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Archives, Boston.

⁹³ Notice of plaintiff's intention to appeal, October 1848, Suffolk County Court of Common Pleas, Roberts v. City of Boston, Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Archives, Boston.

⁹⁴ Kendrick and Kendrick, *Sarah's Long Walk*, 141.

On the day of oral arguments before the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, Robert Morris stood first and laid out the facts of the case.⁹⁵ Sumner followed with a powerful argument about how discrimination in public education violated the Massachusetts Constitution by denying African American citizens equality before the law.⁹⁶ In constructing this argument, Sumner was “building on the arguments made by black citizens in the form of petitions and *Liberator* articles over the previous decade.”⁹⁷

In March 1850, the Supreme Judicial Court, led by Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw, decided against Sarah and upheld the Boston School Committee’s ability to segregate schools.⁹⁸ It was a crushing loss. The Court conceded that “in the fullest manner, that colored persons, the descendants of Africans, are entitled by law, in this commonwealth, to equal rights, constitution and political, civil and social.”⁹⁹ But Shaw rejected the argument that separate schools “deepen[ed] and perpetuate[d] the odious distinction of caste, founded in a deep-rooted prejudice in public opinion.”¹⁰⁰ Shaw wrote that “this prejudice, if it exists, is not created by law, and probably cannot be changed by law.”¹⁰¹ For Morris as a young lawyer, the words must have been profoundly discouraging. Nonetheless, Morris persevered,

⁹⁵ Kendrick and Kendrick, *Sarah’s Long Walk*, 157-58.

⁹⁶ Kendrick and Kendrick, *Sarah’s Long Walk*, 161-68.

⁹⁷ Kendrick and Kendrick, *Sarah’s Long Walk*, 159.

⁹⁸ *Roberts v. City of Boston*, 59 Mass. (5 Cush.) 198, 209-10 (1850).

⁹⁹ *Roberts*, 59 Mass. at 206.

¹⁰⁰ *Roberts*, 59 Mass. at 209.

¹⁰¹ *Roberts*, 59 Mass. at 209.

continuing the battle for school integration that he had been fighting since at least 1844.¹⁰² He remained part of a group of indefatigable activists who exerted political pressure on the legislature to reverse the damage done by the courts. This persistence ultimately resulted in an 1855 state law requiring integrated schools that effectively rendered *Roberts* void.¹⁰³

Forty-six years after the decision in *Roberts v. the City of Boston*, in a move that undoubtedly would have horrified Morris and Sumner, the United States Supreme Court cited to *Roberts* in *Plessy v. Ferguson* as authority for the doctrine of separate but equal.¹⁰⁴ In doing so, the Court narrowly construed the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and ignored the Massachusetts legislature's effective overruling of the *Roberts* case. Later, in its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court began to embrace the arguments made on behalf of Sarah Roberts.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² "The Smith School," *Liberator*, June 28, 1844, 103, c. 3-4, ProQuest.

¹⁰³ 1855 Mass. Acts 674 (ch. 256); see Introduction to "Unconstitutionality of Separate Colored Schools in Massachusetts," in *The Works of Charles Sumner* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1870), 2: 327-28 (noting that the "error of the Court was repaired" by this legislation and that Robert Morris "a colored lawyer" was "associated" with Sumner in the case).

¹⁰⁴ *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537, 544 (1896).

¹⁰⁵ See Gerald Gillerman, "Sarah Roberts, Charles Sumner, and the Idea of Equality," *Boston Bar Journal* 31, no. 5 (September/October 1987): 45-46. Stephen Kantrowitz notes that the argument made in the *Roberts* case was even broader than the one ultimately embraced by the Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*. In the appellate brief, Sumner, unlike Warren, also addressed the damage that segregation inflicts on white students. See Stephen Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom: Fighting for Black Citizenship in a White Republic, 1829-1889* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), 431.

Morris's place in the story of this historic case largely has been ignored and minimized.¹⁰⁶ The library helps us see Morris as an intellectual equal to Sumner. Morris—not Sumner—likely made the early strategic decision to focus on the broad legal principle of equality as opposed to the inferior facilities and resources of the African American schools.¹⁰⁷ Extant records from the *Roberts* case are sparse, but they establish Morris's critical early involvement and leadership. The original writ from April 1848 features Morris's name and address, and the statement of facts and the notice of intention to appeal are solely in Morris's handwriting, signed by him alone for the plaintiff. The reported decision from the Supreme Judicial Court contains Morris's name.¹⁰⁸ Sumner's name is on the printed version of the appellate brief (printed by none other than Benjamin Roberts), and he made the substantive constitutional arguments before the Supreme Judicial Court.¹⁰⁹ But the decision to help Sarah Roberts pursue full and equal treatment under the law began with Morris. And, even on appeal, Morris was sitting next to Sumner, having addressed the Court first to lay out the facts and procedural history of the case that had consumed him for over two years.

¹⁰⁶ Kendrick and Kendrick, *Sarah's Long Walk*, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Kendrick and Kendrick, *Sarah's Long Walk*, 114-15.

¹⁰⁸ *Roberts v. City of Boston*, 59 Mass. (5 Cush.) 198, 201 (1850).

¹⁰⁹ *Argument of Charles Sumner, Esq. against the Constitutionality of Separate Colored Schools, in the Case of Sarah C. Roberts vs. The City of Boston, before the Supreme Court of Mass., Dec 4, 1849* (Boston: B. F. Roberts, 1849).

The relationship between Robert Morris and Charles Sumner did not end with the *Roberts* case. Sumner presented the motion for Morris's admission to the federal bar; Morris's old mentor, Ellis Gray Loring, supported the motion.¹¹⁰ Sumner used his power and influence to support Morris's later efforts to integrate the Massachusetts militia.¹¹¹ And years later, it would be Senator Sumner who helped Morris secure a passport for his son, Robert Jr., as he went abroad to study in France; Secretary of State William Seward had been holding up approval of the passport "on account of his color."¹¹²

Not surprisingly, Sumner occupies a place in Morris's library. In 1856, Morris acquired the compilation of Sumner's speeches and addresses.¹¹³ The compilation ends with Sumner's vociferously antislavery "Crimes Against Kansas" speech, which he had given earlier that year on the Senate floor. Later on the day of the speech, Representative Preston Brooks of South Carolina brutally attacked Sumner while he was writing at his desk in the Senate chamber, beating him to the point of unconsciousness.¹¹⁴ It would be 1859 before Sumner returned to the

¹¹⁰ William C. Nell, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution, with Sketches of Several Distinguished Colored Persons: To Which Is Added a Brief Survey of the Condition and Prospects of Colored Americans* (Boston: Robert F. Wallcut, 1855), 327.

¹¹¹ Kendrick and Kendrick, *Sarah's Long Walk*, 216.

¹¹² Robert Morris to Charles Sumner, 7 March 1866, Charles Sumner Correspondence, 1829-1874 (MS Am 1), Houghton Library, Harvard University, *The Papers of Charles Sumner* (Chadwyck-Healey, 1988), microfilm. Morris enclosed a photo of Robert Jr. with this letter, which is brimming with pride over his son's accomplishments.

¹¹³ Charles Sumner, *Recent Speeches and Addresses* (Boston: Higgins and Bradley, 1856). Morris signed and dated his copy 1856, the year of publication.

¹¹⁴ David Donald, *Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 293-97.

Senate. In an 1860 letter to Sumner, Morris referenced the attack. He thanked the Senator for a recent speech “in exposition of the barbarism of slavery.” He then expressed appreciation for Sumner’s efforts in the school integration effort in Boston, and wrote that after the assault in the Senate four years prior, “no persons felt more keenly and sympathised with you more deeply and sincerely, than your colored constituents in Boston.”¹¹⁵ The two men continued to cross paths, and when his former colleague died in March of 1874, Morris received a formal invitation to the funeral.¹¹⁶

Full and Equal Citizenship

William C. Nell, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution, with Sketches of Several Distinguished Colored Persons: To Which Is Added a Brief Survey of the Condition and Prospects of Colored Americans* (Boston: Robert F. Wallcut, 1855).

James Parton, *General Butler in New Orleans. History of the Administration of the Department of the Gulf in the Year 1862: With an Account of the Capture of New Orleans* [. . .] (New York: Mason Brothers, 1864).

Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 1 (1851), including [David Walker], *Walker’s Appeal, in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens*

¹¹⁵ Robert Morris to Charles Sumner, 11 June 1860, Charles Sumner Correspondence, 1829-1874 (MS Am 1), Houghton Library, Harvard University, *The Papers of Charles Sumner* (Chadwyck-Healey, 1988), microfilm.

¹¹⁶ Funeral invitation, 14 March 1874, folder 26, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum.

of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly, to those of the United States of America, Written in Boston, State of Massachusetts, September 28, 1829, 3rd ed. (Boston: David Walker, 1830) and William Yates, *Rights of Colored Men to Suffrage, Citizenship, and Trial by Jury* [. . .] (Philadelphia: Merrihew and Gunn, 1838).

Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 2 (1851), including *Report on Sundry Petitions Respecting Distinctions of Color* (Boston, [1839]) and *Speech of John Quincy Adams, of Massachusetts: Upon the Right of the People, Men and Women, to Petition; On the Freedom of Speech and of Debate in the House* [. . .] (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1838).

J. A. Carnes, *Journal of a Voyage from Boston to the West Coast of Africa: With a Full Description of the Manner of Trading with the Natives on the Coast* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1852).

Morris's library underscores his fight to guarantee people of color full American citizenship with equal rights to participate in civic life. Historians have shown that for many white activists, a passionate commitment to antislavery and abolition did not necessarily lead to or require a belief in full and equal African American citizenship.¹¹⁷ For Morris, abolition was part of the larger civil rights

¹¹⁷ See, e.g., Manish Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolitionism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 299-338 (describing "The Black Man's Burden"); Gerald Sorin, *Abolitionism: A New Perspective* (New York: Praeger, 1972); Robert L. Allen and Pamela P. Allen, *Reluctant Reformers: Racism and Social Reform Movements in the United States* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1974), 29-48.

battle. Running through so many of his books was the repeated declaration that people of color were equal to whites, not just in Massachusetts, or the United States, but across the world. Morris's fight was not on behalf of African Americans alone; title after title referred to "colored" citizens, encompassing those of African and Native American heritage.

In 1855, Morris acquired a copy of William Cooper Nell's *Colored Patriots of the American Revolution*.¹¹⁸ Nell, who also had been a leader in the school desegregation effort, began working in the early 1840s on this history of soldiers of color. In 1851, Nell petitioned the Massachusetts legislature to appropriate funds "for a monument to be erected to the memory of Crispus Attucks, the first martyr of the American Revolution."¹¹⁹ When the legislature refused to recognize Attucks (while appropriating funds during the same session for a monument to Isaac Davis, a white soldier and patriot), Nell shifted his focus to completing his book as a way to help those lobbying against exclusion from military service.¹²⁰ Robert Morris contributed to Nell's effort to obtain facts and testimonies from his contemporaries.¹²¹ Just as there had been "Colored Patriots of the American Revolution," Nell and Morris insisted there had been "Colored" citizens.

¹¹⁸ William C. Nell, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution, with Sketches of Several Distinguished Colored Persons: To Which Is Added a Brief Survey of the Condition and Prospects of Colored Americans* (Boston: Robert F. Wallcut, 1855).

¹¹⁹ Nell, *Colored Patriots*, 14.

¹²⁰ Nell, *Colored Patriots*, 18; Stephen Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom: Fighting for Black Citizenship in a White Republic, 1829-1889* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), 201.

¹²¹ William C. Nell, "Colored Patriots of the American Revolution," *Liberator*, Aug. 3, 1855, 123, c. 6, ProQuest.

In Massachusetts, Morris was at the forefront of the militia integration effort and regularly petitioned the legislature to remove the word “white” from the Massachusetts militia laws.¹²² The federal Militia Act of 1792 had restricted service in state militias to white male citizens.¹²³ Pursuant to this federal act, Massachusetts law made its militia white only.¹²⁴ Although the state militias were no longer critical for national defense, their segregated status remained a symbol that African Americans in the North still were not treated as equal citizens.

The Robert Morris Papers at the Boston Athenaeum include six petitions in Morris’s hand urging for the integration of the militia. Along with his own signature, these various petitions include signatures from an impressive array of Boston’s African American activists.¹²⁵ The signers include the following: Robert’s brothers Charles, George, and Joseph, indicating a family tradition of involvement and activism; Lewis Hayden, who escaped from slavery in Kentucky and became a lecturer and activist in Boston, owning a home with his wife that served as a “station” on the so-called Underground Railroad; Benjamin Roberts, who, like Morris, remained active in fighting for the equal rights for African American citizens during and after the struggle to integrate Boston’s schools; George L. Ruffin, the first African American graduate of Harvard Law School (or in fact, any

¹²² Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom*, 200.

¹²³ Militia Law of 1792, ch. 33, sec. 1, 1 Stat. 271 (1792).

¹²⁴ Rev. Stat. Mass. ch. 12, § 5 (1836); Gen. Stat. Mass. ch. 13, § 1 (1860).

¹²⁵ Petitions to strike “white” from the militia law, n.d., folder 9, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum.

university law school), as well as a future state legislator and judge; William Pindell, father of another child whom Morris represented in an attempt to obtain admission to a white school in Boston; and John S. Rock, an impressively credentialed physician, dentist, and lawyer.¹²⁶

Even as Nell was writing the book, Morris was drawing on the history of African American military service. During an 1853 speech before the legislature's Committee on the Militia, Morris referred to the "colored soldiers" who fought "during the entire revolutionary struggle" and in the War of 1812 ("the last war with Great Britain when Louisiana was in danger of being overwhelmed with a powerful British force") to buttress his arguments.¹²⁷ In 1855, with the book finally complete, Morris signed and dated his new copy. Purchasing Nell's book was itself a statement of African American patriotism, as Nell painstakingly documented the accomplishments of African Americans in many aspects of American life, including Morris and his achievements at the bar.¹²⁸

In tandem with the fight to integrate the militia, Morris also lobbied the legislature for a charter to form an independent military company of volunteers of

¹²⁶ Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom*, 184-86 (Hayden); Daniel R. Coquillette and Bruce A. Kimball, *On the Battlefield of Merit: Harvard Law School, the First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 280-81 (Ruffin); Kendrick and Kendrick, *Sarah's Long Walk*, 217-23 (Pindell, using the alternate spelling "Pindall"); William Wells Brown, *The Black Man, His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements*, 4th ed. (Boston: Robert F. Wallcut, 1865), 266-68 (Rock).

¹²⁷ "Speech of Robert Morris, Esq. before the Committee on the Militia," 3 March 1853, folder 9, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum.

¹²⁸ Nell, *Colored Patriots*, 327-28.

color excluded from the white militia. In addition to the petitions to strike the word “white” from the militia laws, Morris’s papers include two petitions to form a military company called the “Massasoit Guards.”¹²⁹ Similar companies already had been formed in Rhode Island, New York, and Ohio.¹³⁰ Unfortunately, despite the tirelessness of Morris and other activists, the legislature refused to grant a charter to the Massasoit Guards.¹³¹

With the Civil War, Morris’s decade-long battle in Massachusetts would be preempted by federal law. By 1860, the Massachusetts legislature had accepted Morris’s arguments to eliminate the word “white” from the state militia statute. An amendment passed the legislature on two different occasions; however, Governor Nathaniel Banks vetoed it both times.¹³² In 1862, the federal Militia Act, enacted by Congress, finally amended the old, racially discriminatory federal militia law and allowed for the enrollment of “all able-bodied male citizens” of appropriate age in state militias.¹³³

In 1863, the War Department began recruiting African American soldiers in earnest after Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, and enlistment

¹²⁹ Petitions to form the Massasoit Guards, n.d., folder 9, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum. Like the petitions to remove the word “white” from the militia law, these petitions were signed by well-known figures in Boston like Hayden, Pindell, and Rock; the signatures also include two more Morris siblings: William R. and York Jr.

¹³⁰ Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom*, 199; Nell, *Colored Patriots*, 11.

¹³¹ An unchartered African American militia company called the Liberty Guard would later march, much to Morris’s displeasure. Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom*, 216-17.

¹³² “Another Veto from Gov. Banks,” *Liberator*, Mar. 30, 1860, 50, c. 4, ProQuest.

¹³³ Act of July 17, 1862, ch. 201, 12 Stat. 597 (1862).

began for the newly sanctioned 54th and 55th Massachusetts volunteer infantry regiments. Morris and other activists immediately began lobbying to ensure that African American officers were commissioned to lead these regiments.¹³⁴ After the governor failed to secure approval from the Secretary of War to commission black officers, Morris “left the Executive chamber, determined not to lift a finger for that Regiment, and he had never asked and never would ask any man to enlist in it.”¹³⁵ During the 1863 New England Anti-Slavery Convention, Morris said, “We ought not to have sent off the 54th [regiment], without a single black officer.”¹³⁶

The issue continued to be an important object of Morris’s focus. Morris rarely annotated his books, but his copy of the account of General Benjamin Butler’s service in New Orleans during the Civil War includes notations and page references in his handwriting on the rear paste-down endpaper.¹³⁷ One note refers to the pages discussing Butler’s policy of protecting fugitives as contraband of the war. Another provides a page reference to the discussion of Butler’s commissioning of black officers before the capture of New Orleans.

The belief that abolition was a part—but only a part—of a larger antebellum civil rights struggle is apparent in the two unique pamphlet collections that Morris

¹³⁴ Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom*, 282-83; Thomas H. O’Connor, *Civil War Boston: Home Front and Battlefield* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), 129.

¹³⁵ “New England Anti-Slavery Convention,” *Liberator*, June 5, 1863, 91, c. 2, ProQuest.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ James Parton, *General Butler in New Orleans. History of the Administration of the Department of the Gulf in the Year 1862: With an Account of the Capture of New Orleans, and a Sketch of the Previous Career of the General, Civil and Military* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1864).

himself apparently compiled and had bound. For each compilation, Morris created his own table of contents in his distinctive handwriting, bound in at the front of the volume. He signed and dated both compilations 1851 on the front paste-downs. Almost all of the pamphlets in these two bound volumes relate to civil rights or antislavery and abolitionism.

The compilation that we have designated as Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 1 (1851) includes eighteen pamphlets, all listed under that compilation's heading in Appendix 1. The table of contents and the volume itself opens with *Walker's Appeal*, the influential tract written in 1829 (when Morris was around four years old) by activist David Walker.¹³⁸ The preamble was dedicated to "the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and very expressly to those of the United States of America," an expansive address that would have appealed to Morris. Walker passionately appealed for enslaved people to rise up against their oppressors. His words were so powerful and incendiary that the Governor of Georgia unsuccessfully pled for the mayor of Boston to suppress the work.¹³⁹

If Walker's tract represents Morris's vigorous opposition to the institution of slavery, then the next pamphlet, William Yates's *Rights of Colored Men to Suffrage, Citizenship, and Trial by Jury*, reflects Morris's view that the battle

¹³⁸ Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 1 (1851), [David Walker], *Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly, to those of the United States of America, Written in Boston, State of Massachusetts, September 28, 1829*, 3rd ed. (Boston: David Walker, 1830).

¹³⁹ Nell, *Colored Patriots*, 231-32.

against slavery was one vitally and urgently important front in a larger war.¹⁴⁰ Martha S. Jones describes Yates's influential work as "the very first legal treatise on the rights of free black Americans" and explains that "the oppression of free people of color was a companion to slavery, in Yates's view, with antislavery work necessarily extending into questions of free people's status."¹⁴¹ To support his arguments that men of color were entitled to the full spectrum of rights, Yates cited to legal authority and to the historical contributions of black people to the founding of the country.¹⁴² That combination of citing to precedent in law and history, along with Yates's insistence that the fight for abolition should not ignore the rights of men of color to the privileges and burdens of citizenship, must have been powerful to Morris as a young civil rights lawyer and (future) contributor to William Cooper Nell's *Colored Patriots*.

Although antislavery and abolition pamphlets comprise the bulk of the remainder of the compilation, Morris's broader commitment to racial equality is reflected in the last pamphlet. In this final slot, he placed the account of the 1847 National Convention of Colored People. Morris's name does not appear on the list of delegates—he was young and had just been admitted to the bar. But William Nell and Frederick Douglass both attended as delegates. One of the many

¹⁴⁰ Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 1 (1851), William Yates, *Rights of Colored Men to Suffrage, Citizenship, and Trial by Jury* [. . .] (Philadelphia: Merrihew and Gunn, 1838).

¹⁴¹ Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1-3.

¹⁴² Jones, *Birthright Citizens*, 3-5.

resolutions passed created a committee to report “on the propriety of establishing a Printing Establishment and Press for the colored people of the United States.”¹⁴³ Another stated: “That the Declaration of American Independence is not a lie, and, if the fathers of the Revolution were not base and shameless hypocrites, it is evident that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”¹⁴⁴ The final portion of the pamphlet is a report from a committee charged with reporting on “the best means of abolishing Slavery and *destroying Caste* [emphasis added].”¹⁴⁵ For Morris, the Convention’s proceedings hinted at his understanding of the intertwined nature of racism and slavery.

Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 2 (1851) includes thirty-three pamphlets relating to slavery and “distinctions of color,” which similarly point to Morris’s dual commitment to abolition and full equality. The front endpapers contain a two-page table of contents in Morris’s handwriting. Some of the documents mark congressional debates over the expansion of slavery in the 1840s.¹⁴⁶ Four documents are speeches and essays by Joshua Giddings, the U.S. congressman from

¹⁴³ Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 1, *Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored People, and Their Friends, Held in Troy, N.Y., on the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th October, 1847* (Troy, NY: J. C. Kneeland, 1847), 16.

¹⁴⁴ Morris Pamphlet Compilation No.1, *Proceedings*, 16.

¹⁴⁵ Morris Pamphlet Compilation No.1, *Proceedings*, 31.

¹⁴⁶ Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 2 (1851), including *Speech of Mr. Palfrey, of Massachusetts, on the Bill Creating a Territorial Government for Upper California* [. . .] (N.p., 1849) and [Joshua R. Giddings], *Pacificus: The Rights and Privileges of the Several States in Regard to Slavery: Being a Series of Essays, Published in the Western Reserve Chronicle, (Ohio,) after the Election of 1842* ([Warren, Ohio?], n.d., ca. 1842).

Ohio who was censured in 1842 for violating the House “gag rule” that forbade consideration of antislavery petitions.¹⁴⁷ Multiple speeches and reports document debate surrounding enactment of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Morris included Daniel Webster’s infamous “Seventh of March” speech in which he advocated for enactment of the law as the United States senator from Massachusetts; bound in right next to it are the impassioned responses of white abolitionists Wendell Phillips and Theodore Parker.¹⁴⁸

Other pamphlets in this compilation addressed struggles against racial discrimination outside the context of slavery. For example, a document that Morris labeled “Report Respecting Distinctions of Color” in his table of contents related to the 1839 petitions of 1,400 Massachusetts women in Lynn and other towns asking for repeal of laws that made distinctions among inhabitants on account of color.¹⁴⁹ The petitions asked for the abolition of the laws barring interracial

¹⁴⁷ Many thanks to John D. Gordan III for emphasizing to us the importance of Giddings, who resigned after his censure in March 1842; he then wrote an essay in his own defense before mounting a wildly successful bid to reclaim his vacated seat in that same year. For more on Giddings, see James Brewer Stewart, *Joshua R. Giddings and the Tactics of Radical Politics* (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1970).

¹⁴⁸ Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 2 (1851), including *Speech of the Hon. Daniel Webster upon the Subject of Slavery: Delivered in the United States Senate on Thursday, March 7, 1850* (Boston: Redding, 1850); Wendell Phillips, *Review of Daniel Webster's Speech* (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1850); Wendell Phillips, *Review of Webster's Speech on Slavery* (Boston: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1850) (a second publication of the same Phillips speech); *Theodore Parker's Review of Webster: Speech of Theodore Parker, Delivered in the Old Cradle of Liberty, March 25, 1850* (Boston: R. F. Wallcut, 1850).

¹⁴⁹ Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 2 (1851), Massachusetts House Committee on the Judiciary, *Report on Sundry Petitions Respecting Distinctions of Color* (Boston, [1839]).

marriage and limiting service in the militia to whites only.¹⁵⁰ Morris's entry adds the word "Lincoln" to the petition, emphasizing that William Lincoln of Worcester, Massachusetts had authored the report's dismissive condemnation of the ladies' petitions. Morris similarly included a speech from John Quincy Adams on the right of men and women to petition the government, an impassioned address on antislavery petitions that Congress repeatedly gagged.¹⁵¹ As with Morris's library, the compilation reflected his belief that ending distinctions of color and abolishing slavery were inseparable goals.

Morris's interest in the rights and dignity of people of color extended not only beyond abolition but also beyond the bounds of the United States. Several of his books explore the African continent. These titles suggest Morris's self-identity as part of a larger African community and foreshadow the pan-African movement of later writers such as W. E. B. DuBois. The American journalist and travel writer William Cowper Prime relayed stories of his travels on the Nile in *Boat Life in Egypt and Nubia*.¹⁵² Paul Du Chaillu, in his *Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa*, included a foldout map of Equatorial Africa and discussed the

¹⁵⁰ On the petitions, see Amber D. Moulton, *The Fight for Interracial Marriage Rights in Antebellum Massachusetts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 86-123; Andrew Kull, *The Color-Blind Constitution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 22-26.

¹⁵¹ Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 2 (1851), *Speech of John Quincy Adams, of Massachusetts: Upon the Right of the People, Men and Women, to Petition; On the Freedom of Speech and of Debate in the House of Representatives* [. . .] (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1838).

¹⁵² William C. Prime, *Boat Life in Egypt and Nubia* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1857).

domestic and foreign slave trade.¹⁵³ Joshua A. Carnes's *Journal of a Voyage from Boston to the West Coast of Africa* is a travel journal and antislavery work.¹⁵⁴ In the margins near several discussions of the kidnapping and enslavement of African people—including Carnes's account of seeing an American-built brig with three hundred fifty enslaved people onboard—there are distinctive pencil markings likely added by Morris.¹⁵⁵ Morris's activism in Boston was only part of his story—he saw himself in sympathy with all “Coloured Citizens of the World,” just as David Walker did when titling the pamphlet that opened Morris's first compilation.

Resistance

Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 1 (1851), *Address of the Committee Appointed by a Public Meeting, Held at Faneuil Hall, September 24, 1846, for the Purpose of Considering the Recent Case of Kidnapping from Our Soil, and of Taking Measures to Prevent the Recurrence of Similar Outrages* (Boston: White & Potter, 1846).

Selections from the Writings and Speeches of William Lloyd Garrison (Boston: R. F. Wallcut, 1852).

¹⁵³ Paul B. Du Chaillu, *Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa* [. . .] (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1861).

¹⁵⁴ J. A. Carnes, *Journal of a Voyage from Boston to the West Coast of Africa: With a Full Description of the Manner of Trading with the Natives on the Coast* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1852).

¹⁵⁵ Multiple books in Morris's collection have passages marked by a vertical, wavy line and a short pair of lines that resembles a slightly offset equal sign; another common mark looks similar to a checkmark or crooked “v”. Since his books later became library books, it is possible that subsequent readers made the marks. However, we have worked under the assumption that they came from Morris as they are relatively distinct and appear in a number of his books, as noted in Appendix 1.

Julia Griffiths, ed., *Autographs for Freedom* (Auburn, NY: Wanzer, Beardsley, 1854).

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Dred; A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, 2 vols. (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, 1856).

Harriet Martineau, *The Hour and the Man: A Historical Romance*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1841).

John R. Beard, *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture: The Negro Patriot of Hayti* (London: Ingram, Cooke, 1853).

David Walker's son, Edwin, described Morris as being "as bold as a lion and as severe as justice" when the rights of his race were called into question.¹⁵⁶ This boldness, apparent in Morris's struggle for equal rights in education and military service, comes across most strikingly in his abolition work. He understood that "slavery [was] not to be abolished by peaceable means."¹⁵⁷ Morris's library reflects this spirit of fierce resistance and his identification with Toussaint L'Ouverture and others leaders of resistance.

Morris owned two books about Toussaint L'Ouverture, the once enslaved leader of the Haitian independence movement. The first book, signed and dated

¹⁵⁶ "Eulogy of Hon. Edwin G. Walker," in *In Memoriam: Robert Morris, Sr., Born June 8, 1823, Died 12, 1882* ([Boston?]: n.d., ca. 1883), 40. Morris served as a mentor to Edwin (also known as Edward), who was the first African American member of the Massachusetts legislature and a lawyer. In fact, Morris made the motion for Edwin's admission to the bar, and after the administration of the oath, told him squarely to never "run away from our people." "Eulogy," 36.

¹⁵⁷ "Anniversary of British West India Emancipation: Convention of the Colored Citizens of Massachusetts," *Liberator*, Aug. 13, 1858, 132, c. 4, ProQuest.

1850 by Morris, is a novel by British activist and writer Harriet Martineau. Her work, *The Hour and the Man*, is historical fiction featuring Toussaint as the hero.¹⁵⁸ The second book is a biography, John R. Beard's *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture*. Beard, an English Unitarian minister, depicted Toussaint as an unparalleled general—more powerful than George Washington and a better man than Napoleon.¹⁵⁹ Morris's copy features his distinctive markings in multiple places, most notably around a discussion about how Toussaint could and did read and, in doing so, "became the vindicator of negro freedom."¹⁶⁰ It makes sense that Morris, who valued books and read widely, would have been interested in a passage about Toussaint's literacy and his readings on the concept of liberty. In addition to these markings, Morris copied William Wordsworth's sonnet "To Toussaint L'Ouverture" in both the Martineau and Beard books. In these works on Toussaint, Morris may have found his hero of resistance.

Resistance leaders resonated with Morris. He also owned Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, which appeared four years after *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.¹⁶¹ Stowe wrote the fictional hero, Dred, as the son of Denmark Vesey, the formerly enslaved man who was hanged for planning a slave revolt in

¹⁵⁸ Harriet Martineau, *The Hour and the Man: A Historical Romance*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1841).

¹⁵⁹ John R. Beard, *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture: The Negro Patriot of Hayti* (London: Ingram, Cooke, 1853), 142, 154-55.

¹⁶⁰ Beard, *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture*, 30.

¹⁶¹ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Dred; A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, 2 vols. (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, 1856).

Charleston, South Carolina in the 1820s.¹⁶² Stowe included an appendix with excerpts from Nat Turner's confession of his involvement in the 1831 rebellion in Virginia; she meant these excerpts to serve "as an illustration of the character and views ascribed to Dred."¹⁶³ It is fitting that, sitting on Morris's bookshelf, was an antislavery novel featuring a title character who is an amalgamation of two of the most famous leaders of slave revolts in American history. Indeed, during a speech at the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Boston, Morris once described Vesey and Turner as "intrepid heroes . . . whose very names were a terror to oppressors."¹⁶⁴

Even as a Boston lawyer, Morris looked for opportunities to be an intrepid hero. By 1846, before his admission to the bar, Morris was an active member of Boston's Vigilance Committee, a relief organization dedicated to supporting, protecting, and advocating for fugitives from slavery. After a fugitive reached the shores of Boston only to be forced back on a ship to New Orleans, community leaders convened a meeting at Faneuil Hall on September 24, 1846. An address signed by Morris and others asked their fellow citizens "to give comfort and help to any fugitive slaves who may be thrown upon our hospitality, and to strive to secure for them all the rights and privileges which we claim for ourselves."¹⁶⁵ The

¹⁶² Stowe, *Dred*, 2:274; Faith Berry, ed., *From Bondage to Liberation: Writings by and about Afro-Americans from 1700 to 1918* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 102.

¹⁶³ Stowe, *Dred*, 2:338.

¹⁶⁴ William Wells Brown, *The Black Man, His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements*, 4th ed. (Boston: Robert F. Wallcut, 1865), 228-29.

¹⁶⁵ Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 1 (1851), *Address of the Committee Appointed by a Public Meeting, Held at Faneuil Hall, September 24, 1846, for the Purpose of Considering the Recent Case*

Committee appointed that evening included Morris and William Cooper Nell, on a list dominated by white abolitionists, including Ellis Gray Loring, Charles Sumner, Samuel E. Sewall, John G. King, Theodore Parker, Wendell Phillips, Henry I. Bowditch, and James Freeman Clarke.¹⁶⁶

Morris's two pamphlet compilations include many documents addressing the political conflict over fugitives from slavery. One example is a letter from educator and progressive Massachusetts legislator Horace Mann to his constituents.¹⁶⁷ In this May 1850 letter, Mann turned to a particular bill pending before the United States Senate that dealt with "the business of seeing that fugitives are delivered up."¹⁶⁸ Describing the proposed legislation as a "hideous bill," Mann criticized then-U. S. Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts for supporting it. Mann expressed grave concerns about the constitutionality of the legislation, which would empower an expanded number of federal officials to serve "as tribunals, *without appeal*, for the delivery of any body, who is sworn by anybody, anywhere, to be a fugitive slave" to send the alleged fugitive back to enslavement without the right to a trial by jury.¹⁶⁹

of Kidnapping from Our Soil, and of Taking Measures to Prevent the Recurrence of Similar Outrages (Boston: White & Potter, 1846), 8.

¹⁶⁶ *Address of the Committee*, 39.

¹⁶⁷ Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 1 (1851), Horace Mann, *New Dangers to Freedom, and New Duties for Its Defenders: A Letter by the Hon. Horace Mann to His Constituents, May 3, 1850* (Boston: Redding, 1850). Mann appears five times in Morris's library: once as the subject of a biography by his wife and four times as the author of speeches in Morris's unique compilations.

¹⁶⁸ Mann, *New Dangers to Freedom*, 25 (quoting Daniel Webster).

¹⁶⁹ Mann, *New Dangers to Freedom*, 27.

In September 1850, despite the opposition of legislators like Mann, this pro-slavery Fugitive Slave Act was enacted into law.¹⁷⁰ It created defiant resistance in Boston.¹⁷¹ The newly reconstituted Vigilance Committee, with Morris serving on the Finance Committee, quickly established an office and appointed an agent to whom fugitives could apply for assistance in obtaining employment, clothing, and money.¹⁷² Accounting records indicate much activity: payments for clothing and boarding for fugitives; arranging and financing passage into Canada; printing and posting bills warning of slave hunters; monitoring the whereabouts of slave hunters; and payments to Morris, Ellis Gray Loring, John G. King, and Samuel E. Sewall for legal services rendered to alleged fugitives.¹⁷³ An entry from November 1852 involves legal expenses for “the case of the rescue of Shadrach,” a matter which would bring Morris, in a very personal way, to the forefront of the battle against the Fugitive Slave Act.¹⁷⁴

On February 15, 1851, a man named Shadrach Minkins was working as a waiter at the Cornhill Coffee House in Boston, in an area of the city known today as Government Center. He served coffee to a group of men who in turn served him with an arrest warrant alleging that he was a fugitive from slavery in Virginia. His

¹⁷⁰ Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, ch. 60, 9 Stat. 462 (1850).

¹⁷¹ Stephen Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom: Fighting for Black Citizenship in a White Republic, 1829-1889* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), 176-80.

¹⁷² “Appeal to the Citizens of Boston and Its Neighborhood,” *Liberator*, Nov. 8, 1850, 180, c. 4-5, ProQuest.

¹⁷³ Account Book of Francis Jackson, Treasurer: The Vigilance Committee of Boston, 1850-1861, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston (hereafter cited as Account Book).

¹⁷⁴ Account Book, 22.

customers, deputy United States marshals, arrested him and transported him to the nearby federal courthouse for a hearing.

Robert Morris, along with Richard Henry Dana Jr., John G. King, and Ellis Gray Loring, was immediately on hand to represent Minkins. The lawyers managed to secure a three-day adjournment.¹⁷⁵ After the judge granted the adjournment, the marshals attempted to clear out the courtroom. Before they could complete this task, a group of people pushed through the door into the federal courtroom and grabbed Minkins from the custody of the marshals. Minkins literally was carried out of the courthouse by his rescuers and soon taken across the river to Cambridge.¹⁷⁶ After several days of travel, he made it across the border to Montreal.¹⁷⁷

President Fillmore and many others, including federal officials operating in Boston, responded with outrage. The federal prosecutor in Boston began arresting and indicting suspected participants in the rescue.¹⁷⁸ Robert Morris was among those charged. He was arraigned on April 1, 1851, on charges of aiding Minkins's escape in violation of Section 7 of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.¹⁷⁹ Lewis Hayden, the longtime Boston resident who had escaped from slavery in Kentucky, also was

¹⁷⁵ John Gordan III, *The Fugitive Slave Rescue Trial of Robert Morris: Benjamin Robbins Curtis on the Road to Dred Scott* (Clark, NJ: Talbot Publishing, 2013), 27-29.

¹⁷⁶ Gary Collison, *Shadrach Minkins: From Fugitive Slave to Citizen* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 124-33.

¹⁷⁷ Collison, *Shadrach Minkins*, 174.

¹⁷⁸ Gordan, *Fugitive Slave Rescue Trial*, 30.

¹⁷⁹ Gordan, *Fugitive Slave Rescue Trial*, 33, 33n13.

charged. Hayden's trial ended with a hung jury on the same day that Morris's first trial began in the federal district court in Boston; it ended in a mistrial due to one juror's indication of an unwillingness to enforce the Fugitive Slave Act.¹⁸⁰

Morris was represented at his second trial, like the first, by Richard Henry Dana Jr. and John Parker Hale. Dana and Hale had to contend with several eyewitnesses who testified to Morris's involvement. This included testimony that, just before the rescue, Morris indicated to a group gathered outside of the courtroom that there was a good opportunity to act since the courtroom largely had emptied; that Morris was in a carriage into which Minkins was ushered before it became necessary to proceed on foot, due to the crowd of people in the street; and that Morris was walking down the street with his arm on Minkins's back.¹⁸¹

Dana opened for the defense and, in addition to arguing that the Fugitive Slave Act was unconstitutional and inapplicable, made the case that Morris merely had been a bystander to the whole incident and simply was heading back to his office when the chaos unfolded on the street. Thirteen character witnesses testified on Morris's behalf, including Ellis Gray Loring and Josiah Quincy Jr., the former Boston mayor. Further witnesses offered testimony that cast doubt on the evidence put forth by the prosecution.¹⁸² Lawyer and legal historian John Gordan has recently shown that Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Robbins Curtis (who presided

¹⁸⁰ Gordan, *Fugitive Slave Rescue Trial*, 35-36.

¹⁸¹ Gordan, *Fugitive Slave Rescue Trial*, 55-56.

¹⁸² Gordan, *Fugitive Slave Rescue Trial*, 56-59.

as the trial judge in Morris's second trial) "in his legal rulings and jury instructions repeatedly put his thumb hard on the scale against Morris, distorting existing law to do it."¹⁸³ Despite Curtis's attempt to obtain Morris's conviction, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty on the morning of November 12, 1851.¹⁸⁴

Discussions about Morris's actual guilt or innocence continued after the verdict. It seems clear that reasonable doubt existed as to his actual guilt and that the verdict was not necessarily a case of jury nullification.¹⁸⁵ Soon after his acquittal, Morris wrote a letter to the editor of the *Boston Bee*, reprinted in the *Liberator*, expressing frustration about continued assumptions of his guilt. In the letter, he did not deny his involvement outright but referenced the testimony on his behalf, the integrity of the jury, and the final verdict. He wrote, "I think I have now a right to stand clear in the judgment of this community, and cannot but think it ungenerous in the conductors of an influential paper still to hold up to public odium a young man whose good name and honest toil are the only reliance of himself and his family."¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Gordan, introduction to *Fugitive Slave Rescue Trial*, xviii.

¹⁸⁴ One other defendant in the Rescue cases, Elizur Wright, was acquitted like Morris (the other cases were dismissed). Gordan offers a fascinating account of so-called "faithful jurors" in the Rescue trials. Francis Bigelow, who served as a juror in Wright's trial, admitted years later that he actually had sheltered Shadrach Minkins at his Concord home after Minkins's escape from the Boston courthouse. Gordan notes that one of the jurors in Morris's case, Stephen Kendall, shared a name with a man listed on the rolls of the Boston Vigilance Committee. Gordan, *Fugitive Slave Rescue Trial*, 72, 75-77.

¹⁸⁵ Gordan, *Fugitive Slave Rescue Trial*, 59.

¹⁸⁶ "Rescue of Shadrach," *Liberator*, Nov. 21, 1851, 186, c. 4, ProQuest.

The *Liberator*, in turn, with William Lloyd Garrison at the helm, printed Morris's letter and a brief response expressing disappointment that Morris "should seem to shrink from the glorious imputation of having assisted in the rescue of Shadrach, as though the deed were one that ought to tarnish the character of any one who participated in it."¹⁸⁷ There were other whispers from his contemporaries, likely influenced by Morris's letter, that Morris was too concerned with white opinion.¹⁸⁸ These rumblings persisted to the point that Frederick Douglass had to defend the young lawyer against "the absurd story that [Morris] had said he would send a fugitive slave back to his master."¹⁸⁹

These exchanges raise a number of questions. Was Morris not involved in the rescue and genuinely resentful of the assumption of guilt, as his letter suggests? Was he involved but resistant to the lawbreaker label? Morris grappled with many contradictions as an activist and a lawyer.¹⁹⁰ He tirelessly pushed for the integration of schools and militias and for resistance to the Fugitive Slave Act. However, he "was also an officer of the court, and aspired to be accepted as a gentleman."¹⁹¹ Beyond that, as a practical matter, Morris had a law practice that largely depended on white clients to survive.¹⁹² Perhaps he felt compelled to deny involvement in the

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom*, 215-16.

¹⁸⁹ "Our Eastern Tour," *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, Aug. 26, 1853, 2, c. 4-5, Accessible Archives.

¹⁹⁰ Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom*, 215-17.

¹⁹¹ Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom*, 215.

¹⁹² "Eulogy of Hon. Edwin G. Walker," in *In Memoriam: Robert Morris, Sr., Born June 8, 1823, Died 12, 1882* ([Boston?]: n.d., ca. 1883), 34-35.

rescue in order to preserve his reputation and business. Morris also understood that future arrests of alleged fugitives were inevitable; he could have wanted to deflect as much suspicion as possible away from himself. We may never know his reasons for writing the letter or the extent of his involvement in Minkins's rescue. However, it bears noting that after the death of Lewis Hayden, long suspected to be the leader of the rescue, a friend shared Hayden's account of that February day in 1851. According to the friend, Hayden had described how he and Robert Morris escorted Minkins to the nearby home of Mrs. Elizabeth Riley, who hid Minkins in her attic until he could be transported out of Boston.¹⁹³

In the aftermath of the trial, Morris again turned to books. On behalf of "several colored citizens of Boston," Morris gave Richard Henry Dana Jr. a beautifully bound set of English historian Henry Hallam's complete works in thanks for his representation of Morris and other alleged rescuers. In an accompanying note dated January 1, 1852, Morris wrote that "in [Hallam's] writings we seem to discern a spirit kindred to your own, since they are everywhere animated by that strong sentiment of *liberty protected by Law* which lives in your own breast, and which has in all later times so honorably distinguished the truly great constitutional lawyers, the Erskines and Broughams of England."¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Robert T. Teamoh, "Lewis Hayden Dead," *Boston Daily Globe*, Apr. 7, 1889, 2, c. 6-7, ProQuest.

¹⁹⁴ Charles Francis Adams, *Richard Henry Dana: A Biography* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1890), 1:211.

After the Shadrach Minkins rescue and Morris's own acquittal, Morris continued to be deeply involved in the work of abolitionism and the protection of fugitives, taking actions that cast further doubt upon charges of his complacency. In 1854, he represented Anthony Burns, another fugitive. A rescue was attempted, but it failed, and Burns was returned to slavery in Virginia.¹⁹⁵ Morris also represented the "alleged rioters" who attempted to rescue Burns.¹⁹⁶ During the 1858 Convention of the Colored Citizens of Massachusetts, Morris urged attendees to trample on the Fugitive Slave Act, declaring, "Let us be bold, if any man flies from slavery, and comes among us. When he's reached us, we'll say, he's gone far enough. If any man comes here to New Bedford, and they try to take him away, you telegraph to us in Boston, and we'll come down three hundred strong, and stay with you; and we won't go until he's safe."¹⁹⁷

Morris continued to purchase antislavery titles, and his collection suggests that the books were used beyond private study. One volume in particular, *Autographs for Freedom*, was bound specifically to be exhibited.¹⁹⁸ The book is a compilation of essays by abolitionists such as William Wells Brown, Horace Greeley, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. The editor, Julia Griffiths, was a founding member of the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society

¹⁹⁵ Gordan, *Fugitive Slave Rescue Trial*, 82-84.

¹⁹⁶ "Another Sims Case in Boston," *Liberator*, June 2, 1854, 86, c. 2, ProQuest.

¹⁹⁷ "Anniversary of British West India Emancipation: Convention of the Colored Citizens of Massachusetts," *Liberator*, Aug. 13, 1858, 132, c. 4, ProQuest.

¹⁹⁸ Julia Griffiths, ed., *Autographs for Freedom* (Auburn, NY: Wanzer, Beardsley, 1854).

and an associate of Frederick Douglass. She arranged for the publication of this book to raise money for Douglass's floundering Rochester-based newspaper, *The North Star*.¹⁹⁹ Morris's copy of *Autographs* is one of the loveliest books in his collection. Barbara Adams Hebard, Burns Library Conservator, explains that this book "was meant to be displayed, not kept on a bookshelf. The bright red colored book with the charming gilt-stamped image of an autographed manuscript and plumed pen in inkwell gracing the cover would have looked elegant lying on a parlor table."²⁰⁰ Perhaps visitors to the Morris home on Williams Street in Chelsea, Massachusetts would have seen this antislavery work on proud display.

His speeches and library make it apparent that Morris had few qualms about the level of resistance eventually required to abolish slavery. Morris wanted "the plantations at the South made uninhabitable through fear of the uprising of the slaves."²⁰¹ His annotations in a compilation of William Lloyd Garrison's writings—acquired in 1852 despite the disappointed note in the *Liberator* about the Shadrach Minkins rescue—suggest his understanding that a violent conflict was inevitable.²⁰² The rear fly-leaf of the Garrison compilation contains the following note in Morris's hand: "and, if Slavery continues, the sooner that day comes the

¹⁹⁹ Frank E. Fee Jr., "To No One More Indebted," *Journalism History* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 16.

²⁰⁰ Barbara Adams Hebard, email message to authors, Dec. 16, 2016.

²⁰¹ "Anniversary of British West India Emancipation: Convention of the Colored Citizens of Massachusetts," *Liberator*, Aug. 13, 1858, 132, c. 5, ProQuest. In another illustration of the breadth of Morris's activism, he advocated in the same speech for the importance of the vote (he even mentioned running for state office) and integrated education.

²⁰² *Selections from the Writings and Speeches of William Lloyd Garrison* (Boston: R. F. Wallcut, 1852).

better.” Morris keyed his annotation to a pro-slavery statement that the union would break if Northern abolitionists got their way. That outcome did not seem to worry Morris.

Family and Faith

William Goodell, *Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A History of the Great Struggle in Both Hemispheres; With a View of the Slavery Question in the United States* (New York: William Harned, 1852).

Esther Copley, *A History of Slavery, Illustrated by Anecdotes*, 3rd ed. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1852).

John R. Beard, *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture: The Negro Patriot of Hayti* (London: Ingram, Cooke, 1853).

J. Balmes, *European Civilization: Protestantism and Catholicity Compared*, 8th ed. (Baltimore: Murphy, 1865).

Throughout Morris’s life, family intertwined with political and professional commitments. In February 1853, he noted the family’s address at 28 Williams Street in Chelsea on his copy of abolitionist William Goodell’s *Slavery and Anti-Slavery*.²⁰³ Morris marked several passages in this book, most notably the discussion of Lord Mansfield’s 1772 decision in the *Somerset* case. That decision,

²⁰³ William Goodell, *Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A History of the Great Struggle in Both Hemispheres; With a View of the Slavery Question in the United States* (New York: William Harned, 1852).

which held that enslaved people were free as soon as they set foot on English soil, would have been of particular interest to the young lawyer. Morris also obtained a copy of Esther Copley's *A History of Slavery*.²⁰⁴ Copley was an English writer known for her instructive books for children, including this indictment of slavery. Morris signed the book and noted the year 1853 on the front paste-down. At the time, his daughter Catharine and son Robert Jr. would have been about seven and five, respectively. It seems plausible that he purchased the book to guide conversation with his children.

In that same year, 1853, Catharine Morris gave her husband his copy of J. R. Beard's biography of Toussaint L'Ouverture. The inscription reads "Robert Morris from C. H. M. June 8, 1853," Robert's birthday. His copy is the first edition of Beard's work, so it was newly published when Catharine purchased the gift. Another edition was printed in Boston ten years later, in the midst of the Civil War. Robert copied Wordsworth's sonnet "To Toussaint L'Ouverture" onto the front fly-leaf, just as he had done with his copy of Harriet Martineau's *The Hour and the Man*.²⁰⁵

It is unclear to what extent Catharine Morris was involved in abolitionism beyond her support of Morris and her contributions to his library. Little about her

²⁰⁴ Esther Copley, *A History of Slavery, Illustrated by Anecdotes*, 3rd ed. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1852).

²⁰⁵ See notes 158-160.

has survived. One clue indicating potential direct involvement is the existence of a letter to Catharine from Ellen Craft. Craft and her husband William escaped from slavery in Georgia in 1848 and found refuge in Boston at the home of Lewis and Harriet Hayden.²⁰⁶ While Ellen Craft's 1870 letter to Catharine mentions nothing of the escape or of her time in antebellum Boston, it indicates a warm relationship that likely originated when the Crafts were fugitives in Catharine's hometown. Ellen expresses happiness about her and her husband's recent relocation to Savannah, Georgia; her disappointment at not seeing the Morrises during a visit to Boston; and her delight at the achievements of Robert and Catharine's son, Robert Jr.²⁰⁷ Perhaps the affection in the letter stemmed from Catharine's support when the couple was in hiding.

At some point in the early to mid-1850s, a challenge confronted the Morris family when Catharine converted to Catholicism.²⁰⁸ African Americans in Boston during the antebellum years tended towards Baptist and Methodist denominations; Catholicism was an unusual affiliation in the black community.²⁰⁹ Morris himself had been Methodist.²¹⁰ At Morris's funeral in 1882, Reverend Father Alphonse

²⁰⁶ Stephen Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom: Fighting for Black Citizenship in a White Republic, 1829-1889* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), 184-86.

²⁰⁷ Ellen Craft to Mrs. [Catharine] Morris, 2 June 1870, folder 21, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum.

²⁰⁸ Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom*, 365.

²⁰⁹ James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Black Bostonians: Family Life and Community Struggle in the Antebellum North*, rev. ed. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1999), 47, 61.

²¹⁰ "Eulogy of Hon. Edwin G. Walker," in *In Memoriam: Robert Morris, Sr., Born June 8, 1823, Died 12, 1882* ([Boston?]: n.d., ca. 1883), 31, 41.

Charlier reflected on Morris's response to his wife's decision, noting that Morris initially was "decidedly opposed to the observance of Catholic practices in his family; he would not hear of it."²¹¹ Morris's strong resistance presumably stemmed from the generally anti-abolitionist stance of Boston's Irish Catholic community.²¹² This stance is reflected in articles published in the local Irish Catholic newspaper, the *Pilot*, which supported enactment of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and regularly lambasted William Lloyd Garrison and other leading abolitionists.²¹³

When this crisis of faith and conscience emerged, the Morrises lived in Chelsea, across the Mystic River from Boston. Catharine apparently started attending their local Chelsea parish, and, despite his personal and spiritual struggle with his wife's decision, Morris attended services there by around 1856, although

²¹¹ Reverend Father Alphonse Charlier, S. J., "The Discourse," in *In Memoriam: Robert Morris, Sr., Born June 8, 1823, Died 12, 1882* ([Boston?]: n.d., ca. 1883), 8.

²¹² In the 1840s, Irish Catholic activist Daniel O'Connell desperately tried to recruit Irish immigrants to the abolitionist cause in the United States. In 1843, O'Connell issued his "Great Irish Address," signed by over 60,000 Irish Protestants and Catholics, urging Irish Catholic immigrants to oppose slavery. William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and Charles Lenox Remond tried to sell O'Connell's message in Boston, citing also to Pope Gregory XVI's 1839 apostolic letter condemning the slave trade, but their efforts to combine forces largely failed. Max Longley, *For the Union and the Catholic Church: Four Converts in the Civil War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015), 54-56; Thomas H. O'Connor, *Civil War Boston: Home Front and Battlefield* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), 16-18.

²¹³ William Leonard, "Black and Irish Relations in Nineteenth Century Boston: The Interesting Case of Lawyer Robert Morris," *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 77-79; Thomas H. O'Connor, "The Pilot and the Slave," *Pilot*, Feb. 26, 1999, 2-3. For a more detailed discussion of the cultural, economic, and political factors behind this animosity, see Thomas H. O'Connor, *Civil War Boston: Home Front and Battlefield* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), 15-30.

it would be years before he officially converted.²¹⁴ The lack of records make it difficult to piece together his thought process. Undoubtedly, his love for Catharine played a huge role. Father Charlier noted in his remarks at Morris's funeral that Catharine's example "gradually modified his religious views and softened his unfriendly feelings." After much investigation and prayer, Morris came to "a firm conviction that if he would save his soul he must make his submission to the Church."²¹⁵ It is also possible that the Catholic Church, which had abandoned segregated seating during services, appealed to Morris's interest in integration.²¹⁶

In 1856, when the Morrises were living in Chelsea and worshipping at the local Catholic parish, tragedy struck the couple when their daughter, Catharine, died at ten years old.²¹⁷ During the same year as this devastating loss, Morris initiated what would be a long lasting relationship with a young Irish immigrant in his parish church. Patrick Collins had arrived in Boston from Ireland with his family when he was four years old. In 1854, around age ten, he suffered a broken arm and

²¹⁴ "Boston Mourns the Loss of Her Chief Executive," *Boston Daily Globe*, Sept. 15, 1905, 1, ProQuest (discussing Morris's attendance at the same Chelsea Parish attended by Boston Mayor Patrick Collins as a boy).

²¹⁵ Charlier, "The Discourse," 8.

²¹⁶ Leonard, "Black and Irish Relations," 81.

²¹⁷ "Massachusetts Death Records, 1841-1915," Register of Deaths in the Town of Chelsea for the Year 1856, entry for Catharine D. Morris, 1856, no. 165, Ancestry.com. This was the couple's second time suffering the loss of a child. In February 1848, Robert Jr. arrived, followed in March 1849 by another son, Mason (Catharine's maiden name). In April 1850, a mere month after the crushing loss in the *Roberts* school integration case, the Morrises were dealt another blow when Mason died from pneumonia. "Massachusetts Death Records, 1841-1915," Register of Deaths in the Town of Chelsea for the Year 1850, entry for Mason Morris, 1850, no. 41, Ancestry.com.

bruises during an attack on the parish church and the homes of Chelsea Catholics.²¹⁸ At twelve years old, he became an altar boy in the Chelsea parish and impressed his fellow congregant, Morris, who hired him as an office boy.²¹⁹ Morris likely felt a kinship with the boy who was facing discrimination at roughly the same age Morris had been when he moved from Salem to Boston to work for Ellis Gray Loring. Collins later became a lawyer himself and, in 1901, he was elected mayor of Boston.²²⁰ He served as a pallbearer at Morris's funeral and subsequently offered a reflection during a meeting of the Suffolk Bar, convened to honor the late Morris, whom he described as "modest, courageous, faithful and honest, a conscientious lawyer and a Christian gentleman."²²¹

Morris's relationship with Collins is emblematic of his larger connection with the Irish community. It "defied the conventional paradigm of Irish-black relations."²²² Morris regularly represented Irish clients, mainly criminal defendants and women seeking child support.²²³ Indeed, Morris's friend Edwin Walker

²¹⁸ M. P. Curran, *Life of Patrick A. Collins: With Some of His Most Notable Public Addresses* (Norwood, MA: Norwood Press, 1906), 11-12.

²¹⁹ "Boston Mourns the Loss of Her Chief Executive," *Boston Daily Globe*, Sept. 15, 1905, 1, ProQuest.

²²⁰ "Boston Mourns the Loss of Her Chief Executive," *Boston Daily Globe*, Sept. 15, 1905, 6, ProQuest.

²²¹ "Hon. Patrick A. Collins," in *In Memoriam: Robert Morris, Sr., Born June 8, 1823, Died 12, 1882* ([Boston?]: n.d., ca. 1883), 5, 22.

²²² Stephen Kendrick and Paul Kendrick, *Sarah's Long Walk: The Free Blacks of Boston and How Their Struggle for Equality Changed America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 207-08.

²²³ Docket book for Boston Municipal Court, 1860-1874, Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Archives, Boston. Case entries typically do not include attorney information until 1869, but after that, "R. Morris" is noted next to nonsupport cases with plaintiff names such as Mary E. Keogh, Margaret J. Murphy, and Bridget L. Grannahan.

estimated that 75 percent of Morris's clients were from Boston's Irish community.²²⁴ He even received at least one client referral from Patrick Donahoe, fiery editor of the *Pilot*, the Irish Catholic newspaper that often published pieces against abolition. In a note on *Pilot* stationery, Donahoe asked if Morris could do anything to secure the release of one Barbara Fitzgerald, the mother of a dying child.²²⁵

In addition to his relationship with Patrick Collins, the Catholic Church, and his work on behalf of Irish clients, Morris also supported the creation of an Irish militia company. Some members of the African American community expressed dismay that a charter had been granted to this non-native group, particularly since a similar charter had been denied to petitioners like Morris, who had been seeking approval for the Massasoit Guards.²²⁶ In a speech before a legislative committee, Morris expressed approval of the Irish charter, saying that the denial would have been a "great act of injustice." He continued, saying, "Now, having granted a charter, to our Irish fellow citizens not native born, we confidently expect you will grant a charter to us who are native born citizens."²²⁷

²²⁴ "Eulogy of Hon. Edwin G. Walker," in *In Memoriam: Robert Morris, Sr., Born June 8, 1823, Died 12, 1882* ([Boston?]: n.d., ca. 1883), 34-35.

²²⁵ Patrick Donahoe to Robert Morris, 22 June 1871, folder 21, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum.

²²⁶ Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom*, 203.

²²⁷ "Speech of Robert Morris, Esq. before the Committee on the Militia," 3 March 1853, folder 9, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum.

Morris's struggle with his faith continued, even as his ties to Boston's Irish community strengthened. His library includes evidence of this struggle. In 1865, years after he began attending services in the Chelsea parish, Morris received a copy of Jaime Luciano Balmes's *European Civilization: Protestantism and Catholicity Compared* as a gift.²²⁸ Balmes, a Spanish Catholic priest, "denounced slavery as contrary to Holy Scripture and the Church's tradition."²²⁹ Balmes delves into this in several chapters of the book. One subtitle reads as follows: "The Catholic Church not only employs her doctrines, her maxims, and her spirit of charity, but also makes use of practical means in the abolition of slavery."²³⁰ The book is inscribed to Morris "with respects of Wm T. Connolly," who likely thought that the antislavery content of the book would help Morris embrace the Catholic Church more fully.

When Morris eventually converted in 1870, he "was accompanied to the font by his brother lawyer Connolly as sponsor."²³¹ In September 1870, just before he officially converted, Morris received a charming thank you letter for a gift of grapes from a William T. Connolly.²³² The stationery indicates that Connolly was clerk of the civil business session at the Boston Municipal Court, a court in which

²²⁸ J. Balmes, *European Civilization: Protestantism and Catholicity Compared*, 8th ed. (Baltimore: Murphy, 1865).

²²⁹ Max Longley, *For the Union and the Catholic Church: Four Converts in the Civil War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015), 54.

²³⁰ Balmes, contents of *European Civilization*, xiv.

²³¹ "Brief Notes," *Commonwealth*, October 29, 1870, p. 2, c. 6-7.

²³² William T. Connolly to Robert Morris, 29 September 1870, folder 21, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum.

Morris regularly appeared. The signature on the letter matches the inscription in the book. Additionally, Morris worked on a committee with a William T. Connolly in 1873 to form a Catholic Union in Boston.²³³ It seems likely that the giver of the book, the sponsor, and the court clerk were the same person and that there was a significant relationship between Connolly and Morris based in large part on the latter's spiritual struggle.

Robert and Catharine Morris's relationship with the Catholic Church factored into the education of their sole surviving child, Robert Jr. When the boy was thirteen, his parents enrolled him in the Imperial College in Montpelier, France, a Catholic boarding school; they had to seek Charles Sumner's help to secure their son a passport, with a supporting letter of recommendation from Bishop John B. Fitzpatrick, another Morris family friend.²³⁴ The decision to send their only child abroad may have arisen from concerns about his health and the belief that he would face less racial prejudice in France.²³⁵ Abroad, Robert Jr. thrived, graduating in 1868 with "the two highest prizes."²³⁶

Following Morris's legal career path, Robert Jr. continued his studies at Stonyhurst College, a Jesuit school in England, before gaining admission to Middle

²³³ "Catholic Union," *Pilot*, May 3, 1873, 1, c. 3.

²³⁴ Robert Morris to Charles Sumner, 7 March 1866, Charles Sumner Correspondence, 1829-1874 (MS Am 1), Houghton Library, Harvard University, *The Papers of Charles Sumner* (Chadwyck-Healey, 1988), microfilm.

²³⁵ T. Baldy to Robert Morris ("Cher Monsieur"), 19 July 1862, folder 13, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum; Leonard, "Black and Irish Relations," 80. This was around 1861, so either the country was on the cusp of war or the Civil War had already begun.

²³⁶ "Personal," *Congregationalist and Boston Recorder*, Oct. 1, 1868, 320, c. 2, Gale.

Temple in London in 1870.²³⁷ He returned to the United States by 1871 and spent a year at Harvard Law School before reading law in the office of a practitioner, presumably his father.²³⁸ Robert Morris Jr. was admitted to the Suffolk Bar in September 1874.²³⁹ Thereafter, the father and son duo practiced law together. The Boston Athenaeum's collection includes a business card for "Robert Morris & Son, Attorneys and Counsellors at Law."²⁴⁰ The *Massachusetts Reports* includes a decision from at least one case with "R. Morris & R. Morris, Jr." listed as attorneys for the defendants. The Supreme Judicial Court decided in favor of their clients in the matter, a tort action for wrongful conversion.²⁴¹ The father and son partnership ended with the deaths of Morris and Robert Jr. within two weeks of each other in December 1882.²⁴²

Robert Morris Sr. died at home on December 12, 1882, after a long struggle with heart disease.²⁴³ His funeral was held at the Jesuit Church of the Immaculate

²³⁷ E. I. Purbrick, S.J., to Robert Morris, 9 May 1870, folder 21, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum (telling Morris Sr. that he could secure Robert Jr. housing with "an excellent Catholic family" for his tenure at Middle Temple); *Register of Admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple: From the Fifteenth Century to the Year 1944* (London: Butterworth, 1949), 2:570.

²³⁸ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Law School of Harvard University, 1817-1887* (Cambridge, MA: Charles W. Sever, 1888), 101, 202.

²³⁹ William T. Davis, *Bench and Bar of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in Two Volumes* (Boston: Boston History Company, 1895), 1:527.

²⁴⁰ Business card, folder 1, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum. The card states "French Spoken," highlighting language skills that Robert Jr. presumably obtained while studying in France.

²⁴¹ *Morse v. Elms*, 131 Mass. 151, 152 (1881).

²⁴² "Massachusetts Death Records, 1841-1915," Register of Deaths in the Town of Boston for the Year 1882, entry for Robert Morris, 1882, no. 8896, Ancestry.com. Robert Jr. died of typhoid fever. He was unmarried and left no known descendants.

²⁴³ "Massachusetts Death Records, 1841-1915," Register of Deaths in the Town of Boston for the Year 1882, entry for Robert Morris, 1882, no. 8533, Ancestry.com; "Eulogy of Hon. Edwin G.

Conception, where he had converted in 1870 and “found a home in the Catholic church free from the prejudice of caste, and where all, to its credit be it said, are recognized as equal before God.”²⁴⁴ Through this church, the Morrises had forged connections with a very young Boston College, which was physically adjacent and administratively intertwined.²⁴⁵ Morris corresponded with Reverend Robert Fulton, S.J., first dean and early president of Boston College.²⁴⁶ Fulton also granted Morris a life membership to the Boston College Young Men’s Catholic Association.²⁴⁷ Robert Jr. had been involved as well, serving—in a fitting nod to the family’s appreciation of books—as the librarian.²⁴⁸ At Morris’s funeral, the president of Boston College, Reverend Jeremiah O’Connor, S.J., Patrick Collins, and William T. Connolly, stood alongside Edwin G. Walker, George Ruffin, and Lewis Hayden,

Walker,” in *In Memoriam: Robert Morris, Sr., Born June 8, 1823, Died 12, 1882* ([Boston?]: n.d., ca. 1883), 42.

²⁴⁴ *In Memoriam*, 5; “Brief Notes,” *Commonwealth*, October 29, 1870, p. 2, c. 6-7. The Morrises had moved to this congregation from their Chelsea parish at some point after March 1861, when their friend Bishop John B. Fitzpatrick presided over the dedication. “Catholic Church Dedication in Boston,” *New York Times*, Mar. 11, 1861, 8, c. 2, ProQuest. When they moved from Chelsea to Boston in late 1860s or early 1870s, their new home at 78 West Newton Street was mere blocks from the Immaculate Conception Church.

²⁴⁵ Charles F. Donovan, David R. Dunigan, and Paul A. FitzGerald, *History of Boston College: From the Beginnings to 1990* (Chestnut Hill, MA: University Press of Boston College), 20-21.

²⁴⁶ Donovan, Dunigan, and FitzGerald, *History of Boston College*, 25, 43. Two letters in Morris’s papers at the Boston Athenaeum indicate a cordial relationship. Undated letters from Robert Fulton to Robert Morris, folder 24, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum.

²⁴⁷ “Boston College YMCA Life Member,” folder 1, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum.

²⁴⁸ “Brochure of Boston College and Its Associations,” 5 February 1894, box 16, folder 4, Young Men’s Catholic Association of Boston College Records, 1875-1941, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

perfectly illustrating Morris's position at the crossroads of Boston's Irish Catholic and African American communities.²⁴⁹

Conclusion

Robert Morris's unwavering commitment to securing full and equal rights for people of color has been obscured by the passage of time. If Robert Morris Jr. had lived longer, he might have followed the tradition of so many sons of famous antebellum lawyers and created an edited volume of his father's speeches and writings.²⁵⁰ If Morris had left extensive personal papers, historians would have written pages on his legal and political career. Instead, the condescending comments from some white members of the Boston Bar at Morris's memorial service—a source often relied on by historians—minimized his intellectual achievements and led to him often being cast merely as Charles Sumner's sidekick.²⁵¹ Even when Morris was noted, it was largely for his status as a “first”

²⁴⁹ *In Memoriam*, 5. When Catharine Morris died in 1895, her service was held in the same church where her husband's death had brought these individuals together thirteen years prior. “Deaths,” *Boston Daily Globe*, Nov. 21, 1895, 10, c. 2, ProQuest.

²⁵⁰ See, e.g., William Wetmore Story, ed., *Life and Letters of Joseph Story: Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and Dane Professor of Law at Harvard University*, 2 vols. (Boston: C.C. Little and J. Brown, 1851); Richard H. Dana III, ed., *Richard Henry Dana, Jr.: Speeches in Stirring Times, and Letters to a Son* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1910).

²⁵¹ In one particularly bewildering address, lawyer George Searle rambled about the lack of prejudice against Morris and claimed that his success likely was attributable to his race. After saying Morris “certainly was not a great jurist, nor even a learned lawyer,” Searle went on to state that though Morris had a fair law library [hopefully to be recovered one day], “he was not a bookish man.” *In Memoriam*, 17-18. After combing through Morris's achievements and books for over two years, it is hard for us to know which statement is most problematic.

(technically second) African American lawyer. The remnants of the racial caste system that Morris devoted his life to destroying diminished his accomplishments.

The library restores Robert Morris. We see his deep intellectual and political commitment to equality under the law for people of color, his self-identification as a leader of resistance by legal and literary means, and his lifelong work as an activist on behalf of specific political goals. At Morris's memorial service, Edwin Walker explained:

In spite of his identity with a neglected and injured people in this boasted republic, in spite of all the obstacles that were placed across his path for over thirty-five years that he was in actual business life, he was a living, walking, uncompromising declaration of the intellectual strength and capacity of the American black man.²⁵²

Through books—acquiring, reading, gifting, and patronizing—Robert Morris pursued justice. Morris lived to embody the words that twice he copied into his books:

[. . .] Yet die not, do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow.
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live and take comfort. Thou hast left behind

²⁵² “Eulogy of Hon. Edwin G. Walker,” in *In Memoriam: Robert Morris, Sr., Born June 8, 1823, Died 12, 1882* ([Boston?]: n.d., ca. 1883), 43.

Powers that will work for thee; air, earth and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind,
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love and man's unconquerable mind.²⁵³

Books and the written word were Morris's weapons in the great struggle for full equality for African Americans and people of color. Like his great hero, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Morris was not forgotten. And his books, worn and well-used, bear witness to Morris's unconquerable mind.

²⁵³ Excerpt from William Wordsworth's "To Toussaint L'Ouverture," as reproduced by Robert Morris in his copies of J. R. Beard's *Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture* and Harriet Martineau's *The Hour and the Man*. For an image, see Appendix 2.

Appendix 1: The Robert Morris Collection

Introductory Note

The Robert Morris collection at the John J. Burns Library, Boston College, currently consists of seventy-five titles, two of which are pamphlet collections likely compiled by Morris himself. The Morris books can be retrieved by searching Morris as a local collection name in the Boston College Libraries catalog. Since his books were intermingled at various points with the Boston College and Boston College High School general collections, other books belonging to Morris may be discovered in the future.

For each title listed below, we have transcribed visible signatures and inscriptions. Other ownership information is indicated where applicable, usually with the following abbreviations:

SUB – Morris signature legible underneath Morris gift bookplate

SNV – Writing under Morris gift bookplate is not visible or illegible

A – Annotations in what we believe to be Morris's hand

DM – Markings in the margins that we believe to be Morris's based on distinctiveness and appearance throughout multiple books

EE – Early edition of the title (first or in same publication year as first), according to WorldCat title search

The Robert Morris Collection
John J. Burns Library, Boston College

Arago, Francois. *Biographies of Distinguished Scientific Men*. Translated by Admiral W. H. Smyth, Rev. Baden Powell, and Robert Grant. Vol. 1 of 2. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1859. [Front paste-down: "Robert Morris."]

Balmes, J. *European Civilization: Protestantism and Catholicity Compared*. 8th ed. Baltimore: Murphy, 1865. [Front fly-leaf: "Robert Morris Esq, with respects of Wm T. Connolly, Mch 11, 1865."]

Beard, John R. *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture: The Negro Patriot of Hayti*. London: Ingram, Cooke, 1853. [DM; EE. Front paste-down: "Robert Morris from C.H.M. June 8, 1853." Front fly-leaf: Morris's transcription of Wordsworth's "To Toussaint L'Ouverture."]

[Bowditch, Henry Ingersoll]. *Memoir of Nathaniel Bowditch*. Boston: James Monroe, 1841. [Front fly-leaf: "Robert Morris from his friend J. G. K. Jan. 1. 1840."]

Bowles, Samuel. *Our New West. Records of Travel between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean* [. . .]. Hartford, CT: Hartford Publishing, 1869. [SUB; EE]

Brougham, Henry Lord. *Historical Sketches of Statesmen Who Flourished in the Time of George III. Together with Remarks on the French Revolution*. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Parry and M'Millan, 1854. [SUB]

Burns, Robert. *The Works of Robert Burns: With an Account of His Life, and Criticism on His Writing to Which Are Prefixed Some Observations on the Character and Condition of the Scottish Peasantry*. Edited by James Currie. Philadelphia: Crissy & Markley, 1851. [DM. Recto of early blank: "Robert Morris—Oct^r. 1852."]

Campbell, Thomas. *The Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell: Including Theodric, and Many Other Pieces Not Contained in Any Former Edition*. Philadelphia: J. Crissy, and J. Grigg, 1839. [DM. Verso of early blank: "Robert Morris Jr. 24 July 1841."]

Carnes, J. A. *Journal of a Voyage from Boston to the West Coast of Africa: With a Full Description of the Manner of Trading with the Natives on the Coast*. Boston:

John P. Jewett, 1852. [A; DM; EE. Front fly-leaf: "Robert Morris—Nov. 1852." First page of Chapter 1: "Rob^t. Morris."]

Channing, William E. *The Works of William E. Channing, D. D.* 6th ed. 6 vols. Boston: James Munroe, 1846. [Front fly-leaf of volume 1: "Mr. & Mrs. Robert Morris—with the kind regards of their friend James Freeman Clark. Boston, June, 1846."]

Clay, Cassius Marcellus. *The Writings of Cassius Marcellus Clay, Including Speeches and Addresses*. Edited by Horace Greeley. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1848. [SNV; EE]

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. With an Introductory Essay upon His Philosophical and Theological Opinions*. Edited by William G. T. Shedd. Vols. 1 and 2 of 7. New York: Harper & Bros., 1853. [SUB; EE]

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats. *The Poetical Works of Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, Complete in One Volume*. Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwait, 1839. [Front fly-leaf and title page: "Rob^t. Morris." Pasted newspaper clipping of Shelley's "Moonlit Battlefield."]

Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Ways of the Hour: A Tale*. New York: James G. Gregory, 1864. [SUB]

Copley, Esther. *A History of Slavery, Illustrated by Anecdotes*. 3rd ed. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1852. [Front paste-down: "Robert Morris ~ 1853~."]

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845. [EE. Front fly-leaf: "Robert Morris Jr. May 19, 1945."]

Downing, A. J. *The Architecture of Country Houses; Including Designs for Cottages, Farm-Houses, and Villas, with Remarks on Interiors, Furniture, and the Best Modes of Warming and Ventilating*. New York: D. Appleton, 1856. [Title page: "Robert Morris."]

Drake, Joseph Rodman. *The Culprit Fay*. New York: Rudd & Carleton, 1859. [SNV]

Drown, Daniel A. *Fragrant Flowers, and Other Poems*. Boston: Walker, Wise, 1860. [SUB; EE]

Du Chaillu, Paul B. *Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa; With Accounts of the Manners and Customs of the People, and of the Chase of the Gorilla, the Crocodile, Leopard, Elephant, Hippopotamus, and Other Animals*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1861. [EE. Front fly-leaf: "Robert Morris."]

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *English Traits*. Boston: Phillips, Sampson, 1856. [EE. Front paste-down: "Robert Morris."]

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Essays: First Series*. Boston: J. Munroe, 1841. [EE. Front paste-down: "Robert Morris: Oct^r. 1844." Head of title: "Truth crushed to the earth will rise again."]

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Essays: Second Series*. Boston: J. Munroe, 1844. [EE. Front paste-down: "Robert Morris: Oct^r. 1844."]

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Nature; Addresses, and Lectures*. Boston: James Munroe, 1849. [EE. Front paste-down: "Robert Morris 1849." Half-title: "Rob^t. Morris Jan. 1850—."]

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Representative Men: Seven Lectures*. Boston: Phillips, Sampson, 1850. [EE. Front paste-down: "Robert Morris. July 1850~." Head of Chapter 1: "Robert Morris."]

Fowler, O. S. *Physiology, Animal and Mental: Applied to the Preservation and Restoration of Health of Body, and Power of Mind*. 5th ed. New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1848. [SNV]

Garrison, William Lloyd. *Selections from the Writings and Speeches of William Lloyd Garrison*. Boston: R. F. Wallcut, 1852. [SUB; A; EE]

Gasparin, Agénor. *The Uprising of a Great People. The United States in 1861*. Translated by Mary L. Booth. 3rd ed. New York: Charles Scribner, 1861. [SUB; DM. Head of Chapter 1: "July 23d 1861."]

Gérando, Joseph-Marie. *Self-Education: Or, the Means and Art of Moral Progress*. Translated by Elizabeth P. Peabody. Boston: T. O. H. P. Burnham, 1860. [Front paste-down: "Catharine Morris, with the love and New Years' wishes of Robert Morris. Jan. 1, 1860." Head of title: "Catharine Morris."]

Goodell, William. *Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A History of the Great Struggle in Both Hemispheres; With a View of the Slavery Question in the United States*. New York: William Harned, 1852. [A; EE. Front paste-down: "Robert Morris Feb. 26, 1853 – 28 Williams St. Chelsea."]

Griffiths, Julia, ed. *Autographs for Freedom*. Auburn, NY: Wanzer, Beardsley, 1854. [SUB]

Gurney, Joseph John. *A Winter in the West Indies, Described in Familiar Letters to Henry Clay, of Kentucky*. 2nd ed. London: John Murray, 1840. [Head of title: "Robert Morris."]

Hale, Mary. *Poems*. Boston: William D. Ticknor, 1840. [SUB]

Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay. *The Federalist, on the New Constitution, Written in the Year 1788*. 6th ed. Washington: J. & G. S. Gideon, 1845. [Front paste-down: "Robert Morris 1849."]

Hamilton, Alexander, and James Madison. *Letters of Pacificus and Helvidius on the Proclamation of Neutrality of 1793*. Washington: J. & G. S. Gideon, 1845. [SUB]

Hemans, Felicia. *Poems by Felicia Hemans*. Edited by Rufus W. Griswold. Philadelphia: Sorin and Ball, 1845. [Front fly-leaf: "Miss Catharine H. Mason with the love of Robert Morris, Jr. Jan^y. 1, 1845."]

Hildreth, Richard. *Despotism in America: An Inquiry into the Nature, Results, and Legal Basis of the Slave-Holding System in the United States*. Boston: J. P. Jewett, 1854. [Front paste-down: "Rob^t. Morris, 1854."]

Holland, E. G. *Reviews and Essays*. Boston: William Crosby and H. P. Nichols, 1849. [EE. Front paste-down: "Robert Morris October 1849—."]

[Hugo, Adèle]. *Victor Hugo: By a Witness of His Life*. Translated by Charles Edwin Wilbour. New York: Carleton, 1863. [SNV]

Jameson, Mrs. [Anna]. *A Commonplace Book of Thoughts, Memories, and Fancies, Original and Selected*. New York: D. Appleton, 1855. [SNV]

Kenyon, William Asbury. *Poetry of Observation, and Other Poems*. Boston: William Crosby and H. P. Nichols, 1851. [SUB; EE]

Lewis, Alonzo. *The History of Lynn, Including Nahant*. 2nd ed. Boston: Samuel N. Dickinson, 1844. [Front paste-down and fly-leaf: "Robert Morris Jr. From C.H.M. (Catharine H. Mason) – Jan. 1, 1845."]

Lewis, R. B. *Light and Truth; Collected from the Bible and Ancient and Modern History, Containing the Universal History of the Colored and the Indian Race, from the Creation of the World to the Present Time*. Boston: Committee of Colored Gentlemen, printed by Benjamin F. Roberts, 1844. [EE. Front fly-leaf: "Robert Morris 1850 –."]

[Mann, Mary Tyler Peabody]. *Life of Horace Mann. By His Wife*. Boston: Walker, Fuller, 1865. [DM; EE. Head of introduction: "Robert Morris."]

Martineau, Harriet. *The Hour and the Man: An Historical Romance*. 2 vols. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1841. [EE; SUB with 1850 date. Head of Chapter 1: "Rob^t Morris." Front fly-leaf of volume 2: Morris's transcription of Wordsworth's "To Toussaint L'Ouverture."]

Martineau, Harriet. *Household Education*. Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1849. [SUB, possibly by Catharine Morris; EE]

Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 1 (1851). [Front paste-down: "Robert Morris – 1851 –."] This bound volume is a collection of the following 18 pamphlets, compiled by Morris and listed in the order in which they appear on Morris's handwritten table of contents:

- [Walker, David]. *Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly, to those of the United States of America, Written in Boston, State of Massachusetts, September 28, 1829*. 3rd ed. Boston: David Walker, 1830. [Head of title: "Morris"]
- Yates, William. *Rights of Colored Men to Suffrage, Citizenship, and Trial by Jury* [. . .]. Philadelphia: Merrihew and Gunn, 1838.
- *Address of the Committee Appointed by a Public Meeting, Held at Faneuil Hall, September 24, 1846, for the Purpose of Considering the Recent Case*

of Kidnapping from Our Soil and of Taking Measures to Prevent the Recurrence of Similar Outrages. Boston: White & Potter, 1846.

- *Facts Proving the Good Conduct and Prosperity of Emancipated Negroes, and Remarks on Melioration.* N.p., [183-?].
- Stewart, Charles. *The West India Question: Immediate Emancipation Would Be Safe for the Masters;—Profitable for the Masters;—Happy for the Slaves* [. . .]. Newburyport: Charles Whipple, 1835.
- *Free Remarks on the Spirit of the Federal Constitution, the Practice of the Federal Government, and the Obligations of the Union, Respecting the Exclusion of Slavery from the Territories and New States.* Philadelphia: A. Finley, 1819.
- *Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, Held in Philadelphia, May 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th, 1838.* Philadelphia: Merrihew and Gunn, 1838.
- Martineau, Harriet. *Views of Slavery and Emancipation* [. . .]. New York: Piercy Reed, 1837. [Head of title: “Robert Morris.”]
- Harris, Thaddeus Mason. *A Discourse Delivered before the African Society in Boston, 15th of July, 1822, on the Anniversary Celebration of the Abolition of the Slave Trade.* Boston: Phelps and Farnham, 1822.
- [Clark, B. C]. *A Geographical Sketch of St. Domingo, Cuba, and Nicaragua* [. . .]. Boston: Eastburn's Press, 1850.
- [Lundy, Benjamin]. *The War in Texas; A Review of Facts and Circumstances, Showing That This Contest Is a Crusade against Mexico Set on Foot and Supported by Slaveholders, Land-Speculators, &c. in Order to Re-Establish, Extend, and Perpetuate the System of Slavery and the Slave Trade.* Philadelphia: Merrihew and Gunn, 1837.
- Mann, Horace. *New Dangers to Freedom, and New Duties for Its Defenders: A Letter by the Hon. Horace Mann to His Constituents, May 3, 1850.* Boston: Redding, 1850.

- Bowditch, William I. *The Anti-Slavery Reform, Its Principle and Method*. Boston: Robert F. Wallcut, 1850.
- *Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Society*. New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, [184-?].
- Furness, William Henry. *An Address Delivered before a Meeting of the Members and Friends of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society during the Annual Fair December 19, 1849*. Philadelphia: Merrihew and Thompson, 1850.
- Green, Beriah. *Things for Northern Men to Do* [. . .]. New York, 1836.
- Douglass, Frederick. *American Slavery: Report of a Public Meeting Held at Finsbury Chapel, Moorfields, to Receive Frederick Douglass, the American Slave, on Friday, May 22, 1846*. London: C.B. Christian, 1846.
- *Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored People, and Their Friends, Held in Troy, N.Y., on the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th October, 1847*. Troy, NY: J. C. Kneeland, 1847.

Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 2 (1851). [Front paste-down: “Robert Morris – 1851.”] This bound volume is a collection of the following 33 pamphlets, compiled by Morris, and listed in the order in which they appear in the volume (his handwritten table of contents is slightly out of order):

- Mann, Horace. *The Fugitive Slave Law: Speech of Mr. Horace Mann, of Mass., Delivered in the House of Representatives, in Committee of the Whole, on the State of the Union, Friday, February 28, 1851, on the Fugitive Slave Law*. [Washington, DC]: Congressional Globe Office, n.d., ca. 1851. [Slip attached to first page, partially illegible, but includes “Robert Morris Esq. of Boston.”]
- Mann, Horace. *Speech of Horace Mann, of Massachusetts, in the House of Representatives, Feb. 23, 1849: On Slavery in the United States, and the Slave Trade in the District of Columbia*. Boston: W. B. Fowle, n.d., ca. 1849.
- Mann, Horace. *Horace Mann's Letters on the Extension of Slavery into California and New Mexico: And on the Duty of Congress to Provide the*

Trial by Jury for Alleged Fugitive Slaves. [Washington, DC]: Buell & Blanchard, n.d., ca. 1850.

- Giddings, Joshua R. *Speech of Mr. Giddings, of Ohio, on His Motion to Reconsider the Vote Taken upon the Final Passage of the "Bill for the Relief of Owners of Slaves Lost from on Board the Comet and Encomium": House of Representatives, February 13, 1843.* [Washington, DC, 1843?].
- Walker, I. P. *To the People of Wisconsin: Defence of Isaac P. Walker, U.S.S. against the Charge of Having Violated His Pledges and Instructions, on the Subject of Slavery in the Territories.* N.p., n.d., ca. 1850.
- Palfrey, John Gorham. *Speech of Mr. Palfrey, of Massachusetts, on the Bill Creating a Territorial Government for Upper California: Delivered in the House of Representatives of the United States, February 26, 1849.* N.p., n.d., ca. 1849. [Slip attached to first page, includes "Robert Morris"]
- [Giddings, Joshua R.]. *Pacificus: The Rights and Privileges of the Several States in Regard to Slavery; Being a Series of Essays, Published in the Western Reserve Chronicle, (Ohio,) after the Election of 1842.* [Warren, Ohio, 1842?].
- [Giddings, Joshua R.] *The Rights of the Free States Subverted, or, An Enumeration of Some of the Most Prominent Instances in Which the Federal Constitution Has Been Violated by Our National Government for the Benefit of Slavery.* N.p., n.d., ca. 1844.
- Adams, John Quincy. *Speech of John Quincy Adams, of Massachusetts, upon the Right of the People, Men and Women, to Petition; On the Freedom of Speech and of Debate in the House of Representatives of the United States* [. . .]. Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1838.
- Palfrey, John Gorham. *Speech of Mr. Palfrey, of Massachusetts, on the Political Aspect of the Slave Question: Delivered in the House of Representatives, January 26th, 1848.* Washington, DC: J. & G. S. Gideon, 1848. [Slip attached to first page, includes "Robert Morris Esq. (Ellis G. Loring) Boston, Mass"]
- Giddings, Joshua R. *Privileges of Members of Congress: Speech of Mr. Giddings, of Ohio, On the Resolution of Mr. Palfrey to Inquire Whether the*

Members of Congress Had Been Threatened by a Lawless Mob. Delivered in the House of Representatives of the United States, April 25, 1848. [Washington, DC]: J. & G. S. Gideon, n.d., ca. 1848.

- [Hammond, James Henry]. *Gov. Hammond's Letters on Southern Slavery: Addressed to Thomas Clarkson, the English Abolitionist.* Charleston, SC: Walker & Burke, n.d., ca. 1845. [Head of title: "Robert Morris"]
- [Slade, William]. *Speech of Mr. Slade, of Vermont, on the Abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade in the District of Columbia: Delivered in the House of Representatives of the U.S., December 20, 1837; To Which Is Added the Intended Conclusion of the Speech, Suppressed by the Resolution of the House.* [Washington, DC], n.d., ca. 1837.
- Clay, Henry. *Speech of the Hon. Henry Clay, of Kentucky: On Presenting His Compromise Resolutions on the Subject of Slavery: Delivered in Senate, Feb. 5th & 6th, 1850.* New York: Springer & Townsend, 1850.
- Winthrop, Robert C. *Speech of the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, of Massachusetts: Delivered in the U.S. House of Representatives Feb. 21st, in Committee of the Whole on the President's Message.* Boston, 1850. [in the form of a folded newspaper clipping from the *Atlas*, Boston, February 28, 1850]
- Webster, Daniel. *Speech of the Hon. Daniel Webster upon the Subject of Slavery: Delivered in the United States Senate on Thursday, March 7, 1850.* Boston: Redding, 1850.
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Robert Morris
Feb. 26, 1853 -
28 Williams St.
Chelsea. -

75
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 Robert Morris
 from C. H. M.
 June 8, 1853.

92

Contents.

Walker's Appeal

Rights of colored men to trial by Jury &c.

Address of the Boston Vigilance Committee.

Facts proving the Good Conduct &c. of Emancipated negroes.

The West India Question.

Free Remarks on the Exclusion of Slavery from the Territories &c.

Proceedings of the A. S. Convention of American Women.

Views of Slavery Emancipation &c. H. Martineau.

A Discourse on the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

A Geographical Sketch of S^t. Domingo, Cuba &c.

The War in Texas &c. (B. Lundy.)

New Dangers to Freedom, (Horace Mann.)

The Anti Slavery Reform &c. (W. J. Bowditch)

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Things for Northern men to do. (B. Green.)

Report of a Public Meeting held at Moorfields, to Rec^d. F. Douglass.

Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored men &c. Oct. 1847.

Handwritten table of contents for Morris Pamphlet Compilation No. 1 (1851)